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58, Frith Street,  
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Edited by  
**COMPTON MACKENZIE**

TELEPHONE: Regent 1383  
TELEGRAMS:  
Parmaxto, Westcent, London

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## QUARTERLY REVIEW OF RECORDS

By THE EDITOR

THE prospect of giving any kind of adequate survey of the records published during the last quarter is alarming, for I don't believe that any three months since the beginning of THE GRAMOPHONE have produced such a wealth of first-class orchestral and instrumental records. And this would be true even if the celebration of the Beethoven centenary had not added to the critics' responsibility. Perhaps the wisest course will be to postpone the consideration of the Beethoven issues. Luckily the duplication is not excessive, but there is a certain amount of it, and I know that readers will expect me to state my own preferences whenever there is a question of choosing between two or more versions. I believe that in old days the Columbia version of *The Unfinished Symphony* was always the most popular, and my own vote would go for this new version under Sir Henry Wood over the new H.M.V., which was entrusted to Goossens; though,

whether I would spend the extra six shillings on that preference I rather doubt. Admirers of Sir Thomas Beecham should not fail to notice that his *Prince Igor* dances have been re-recorded with splendid results. So too have Sir Henry Wood's successes—the *Faust* ballet music and *The 2nd Hungarian Rhapsody*. In the Columbia list I thought the *Rienzi Overture* with Bruno Walter conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra a fine piece of recording and playing and on the whole better than the new Polydor. If people want something new, I strongly recommend the two records of *With the Wild Geese*, an early composition of Sir Hamilton Harty, conducted by himself with the Hallé Orchestra. He and they are responsible with Archie Camden as soloist for Mozart's *Bassoon Concerto* which becomes more and more delightful every time one hears it. I feel justified in recommending to people who cannot afford the whole work the very lovely slow movement, which is



complete on the second disc. Last month being on the verge of issuing all the symphonies of Beethoven Columbia contented themselves with two records of Dvořák's *Slavonic Dances*, played by the London Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Sir Dan Godfrey. And very pleasant they are.

H.M.V. added to their popular-priced Goossens series the *Peer Gynt Suite* and followed this up with a magnificent re-recording of the *Enigma Variations* conducted by the composer. The gain from the electric process was never more conspicuous. In mid-February a marvellous performance of Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto in E minor* by Kreisler and the Berlin State Opera Orchestra, was followed in March by Albert Coates with a performance of Tchaikovsky's *Sixth Symphony*, that made one realise how pathetic the non-electric sixth symphonies were.

The Parlophone Company has a knack of publishing just what one wants at the very moment one wants it. Among all the crashing of the big guns during this quarter one of the things wanted was the *Casse-Noisette* suite, whereupon Parlophone provided a delightful rendering by the Berlin State Opera House Orchestra under Ed. Moerike. I see these four records were published in an album, though I wasn't sent the album. Another thing I wanted was Weber's *Invitation to the Waltz*, and again Parlophone provided a perfect couple of records. I was not so anxious for *The Ride of the Valkyries*, and I prefer the H.M.V. recording of this, but I did welcome Smetana's *Bartered Bride* Overture, and I thoroughly enjoyed the Dajos Bela String Orchestra in the *Andrea Chénier* fantasia. In addition to these, Edith Lorand provided some delightful violin solos and some melodious Viennese waltzes with her orchestra. Other records this quarter include two excellent records of *The Bohemian Girl* and *The Barber of Seville* with Percy Pitt and the B.B.C. Wireless Symphony Orchestra (Columbia, 4s. 6d.) and also the *Oberon* Overture from Vocalion. Nor must I forget the *Summer Days Suite* of Eric Coates, conducted by the composer, which is good popular stuff and might, I think, have been published by Columbia at a more popular price than 6s. 6d. However, that is the Company's affair, and I do not feel inclined to lament much the cost of this work.

One of the features of the last quarter has been the prominence given to several new or comparatively new singers to the gramophone, and I cannot say that any of them has done much to disturb my admiration for old favourites. The soprano who gave me the most pleasure was Madame Arangi-Lombardi from Columbia, with a really good record from *La Forza del Destino*, in which the La Scala Chorus comes out well. I was not

greatly impressed by Miss Eva Turner's new records. She has a good voice for plenty of songs, but it is not a voice to make a song about. Miss Margaret Sheridan recording for H.M.V. (red seal) sang the *Ave Maria* from *Otello* with some character, but the *Un bel dì* on the other side was a conventional affair. H.M.V. gave us on a plum-coloured 10 in. disc a remarkable piece of high soprano singing by Rosina Torri in two arias from *Turandot*. It is accomplished singing in the typical Italian manner, but lacked any emotion. Madame Galli-Curci has kept all her vices and lost most of her virtues in her latest records, and I cannot find much to praise in her *Shadow Song*. In fact, if it were not for some splendid records by Madame Emmy Bettendorf I should be feeling gloomy about sopranos on the gramophone. Her duets with Melchior from *Lohengrin* are absolutely in the front rank, and though I don't think that the great aria from *Oberon—Ocean, thou Mighty Monster—* is one that suits her style, I don't know of any other soprano now recording who would have done it better. I must pay a compliment to the Parlophone Company for the way they maintain the excellence of their vocal records. I may not always be very enthusiastic over their singers, but never during the last year did I find a singer without as much individuality as made him or her worth recording. Tino Pattiera, their latest tenor, is an example of what I mean. I don't care for him in *Bohème*, but I should expect to find him giving us a really remarkable performance in *Otello*. I must not forget a welcome couple of records from Dame Nellie Melba. I did not care for her in the duet from *Traviata* with John Brownlee, but the other three arias chosen are beautiful. A new baritone appeared on plum-coloured H.M.V.'s and prejudiced me in his favour by singing one of my favourite songs so that I could hear every word of it, and at the same time with enough, but not too much, dramatic expression. This is Mr. Stuart Robertson. He may be heard again with conspicuous success in the choral part of the *Ninth Symphony* issued by H.M.V. None of the tenors distinguished himself particularly this quarter. I am not impressed by John O'Sullivan, who is to appear at Covent Garden next season. I liked Aroldo Lindi's second record much less than his first one. Charles Hackett is always attractive, but he is really *too* nasal, and I am not impressed by Mr. William Martin. These are all Columbia artists, and with them in the second-class I put Mr. Walter Widdop of H.M.V. The fact is that we are suffering from a famine of really fine singers at the present moment. This famine is made more apparent by the way all these new singers sing the same arias, every one as moderately well as his predecessor. I heard Jan Kiepura, the Polish tenor, on the Radio when he made his English debut at the Albert Hall, and I am glad to see that



he has been recorded, because he may be able thus to correct certain faults which spoil what, if he has the necessary humility, would be a singer in the very front rank. On the Radio his voice, particularly in the lower registers, seemed to have an excessive *vibrato*; but I should not care to say that at his age he had an incurable *vibrato* unless I had heard him in the flesh. I rather suspect that he was employing a deliberate tremolo under the impression that it was having an emotional effect. It was a pity to sing the *Flower Song* from *Carmen* when he was beginning to get tired; I should have liked to have heard him in that at the beginning of the evening. He has faults of taste, all of which could be cured by a stern master. However, when one has said all this, there remains in one's mind the impression of a genuine personality able to get itself across not merely to the unhappily placed audience in the Albert Hall, but also to the vast unseen audience that was listening to him on the Radio. That anybody should come along at this date and sing the two hackneyed arias from *Rigoletto* with an entirely fresh enthusiasm and a delicious sense of comedy, so that one felt one had heard them for the first time, is an achievement that no amount of poky criticism can spoil. I hope he will take warning by Fleta, whose bad taste has spoilt what might have been a great voice, and I repeat that I shall be glad to hear him on records, for I hope that a young man like him will be able to realize in time where he goes wrong.

I was interested to hear Miss Olga Haley on the Radio the other day, and to hear with what complete success her exquisite voice and style passed the test. There are several more delightful records of hers in the Vocalion bulletins this year, and I hope that this great artist is not being appreciated less because her name is so easily pronounced.

I would give all the choral records that have appeared hitherto for the three records of the Mozart *Requiem*, sung by the Philharmonic Choir. Apart from the performance and the recording, which to my mind is far the best that any company has yet given us in choral work, the music itself does seem to be written in the shadow of death. In the *Agnus Dei* the composer seems to have left the orchestra on earth and taken his radiant voices a step towards eternity. Wonderful music, wonderful records! Yet most people probably prefer the *Elijah* of Mendelssohn. It would take an Einstein of musical criticism to explain that gloomy fact.

There have been plenty of instrumental records during this quarter, so many that I can only single out Albert Sammons' performance of Tartini's *Devil's Trill* sonata for particular mention. This is complete on two Columbia 10in. discs. There has been a hush in chamber music before the celebration of the Beethoven centenary, yet,

notwithstanding, H.M.V. gave us in the Brahms *Piano quintet in F*, played by the Flonzaley Quartet with Harold Bauer, one of their very finest albums. In the Polydor list I must call attention to a magnificent new recording of *Tod und Verklärung* conducted by the composer. This is one of the most impressive things I have heard on the gramophone yet. I should mention however, that one correspondent has written to me to say that on his instrument, which I will not name, continued blasts and rattles make it quite impossible, no matter what needles he uses. I can only reply that both on Balmain's Big Bertha and on the new H.M.V. there is not a trace of a rattle or a blast. So that I think the fault must lie with my correspondent's instrument or soundbox rather than with the records. I commend to my readers' notice an *Intermezzo* from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* and a beautiful *Rosenkavalier* waltz on the same list. There is also a very good *Jupiter* symphony with new recording. I don't know if anybody will agree with me, but I find that the more I play the *Jupiter* the less I like it compared with the E Flat and the G minor, though I started off by liking it the best of the three. Part of the equipment of contemporary cant criticism is to talk about Mozart's dæmonic quality, and we are always invited to take the *Jupiter* symphony as an instance of this. It is certainly noisier than the other two symphonies, but whether this makes it more dæmonic I am not sufficiently well-educated to say.

I have no doubt whatever that all my readers who have read as far as this will be saying that I have never been so dull as I have been this quarter in writing about records. The fact is I am suffering from the humiliation of the *Daily Mail's* plebiscite over broadcasting programmes. I feel that I have gone on a spiritual strike to protest against the respect given to a quarter of a million trousers and skirts. In another column the *Daily Mail* was expressing anxiety for the future of English singers. It was wondering why English singers are driven abroad. Personally I don't feel that it very much matters whether many of the English singers I have heard on the gramophone are driven abroad or not; but I cannot stand these clammy crocodile's tears. If the English public is encouraged to suppose that its opinion expressed *en masse* has any greater value than the similarly expressed opinion of the most degraded Hottentots, we may as well give up pretending to be anything else but one of the less prosperous colonies of the United States. This washing of our æsthetic dirty linen in public is the greatest disservice that can be rendered. Now, I have no animus against the man in the street provided that he remains a man in the street, or sticks to his strap in the Tube, and does not



pretend to be the man in the studio or the library or the concert-hall; but when we are asked to time the intellectual progress of the race by this heavy, stolid, costive creature, who cannot even get as far as his office without a dose of Kruschen salts every morning, the time has come to protest. It is not that any reasonable being objects to what with a pathetic euphemism are known as variety entertainments, though usually the last quality they achieve is the slightest variety. What one does object to is the deadly monotony of the mediocrity or drabness. There are not enough good performers of this class of entertainment to supply either the radio or the gramophone. When the King attends the Victoria Palace it is possible to secure an excellent two hours' entertainment by ransacking the United Kingdom and the Colonies; but ask even these first-rate entertainers to perform to the same audience every week for a year and it is obvious that everybody would be sick of them in a month. How many comic records stand playing half a dozen times? Very few indeed. The monthly bulletins of the recording companies are evidence of the dearth of good material, even though they can call upon the help of America for their programmes. Take these last three months. Apart from one amusing record of John Henry about a cinema film and a song of Aileen Stanley and Billy Murray called *Bridget O'Flynn* (both published by H.M.V.), I cannot find a single disc worth writing anything about. It is not the fault of the recording companies; they can't make bricks without straw. When these trousers and skirts vote in their thousands for variety entertainments on the Radio, they are thinking how much they have enjoyed such an excellent performance as that at the Victoria Palace. If I were the B.B.C., I should feel strongly tempted to give the British Public variety entertainments all day and night for three months with nothing except an occasional solo on the mouth organ to relieve the monotony. Then perhaps we should hear a little common sense talked. Yet, twenty-seven thousand people did vote for chamber music, and although this is a miserable fraction of the civilised population, it is a larger number than one might have expected.

Some two thousand people voted for recitations and readings, and I must confess I was surprised that twenty of them had done so. The reading of their own works by English poets for the Radio has been sufficiently execrable to give the quietus to English poetry for good and all. Why a man should think Keats' *Ode to a Nightingale* (or whatever he reads) will sound better if he puts his head in a soup-tureen I do not know.

Anybody who had the privilege of hearing Sir Edmund Gosse read Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* will wish that Sir Edmund

might start a reading class for budding and full-blown English poets. I am enlarging on this subject because a number of our readers have written to beg the companies to give us authoritative recordings of contemporary writers reading their work. This may sound a delightful idea to anybody who has not heard English poets on the Radio, but that anybody who has should want to perpetuate these intestinal moans and groans is incredible. Why spend money on a record when you can get the same effect by running the water out of your bath? It is nothing to do with being nervous. Numbers of poets genuinely believe that this is the right way to read verse. Numbers of clergymen suffer from a similar delusion. It's a kind of Pharisaic blight—an attempt to express caste.

One of the significant features of the *Daily Mail* voting was that three times as many people voted for band as for orchestral performances. I attribute this in a large measure to the fact that many more people are familiar with the sound of a band than of an orchestra. Therefore the distortion on most Radio sets is less prejudicial because these people know more or less what a band ought to sound like. I am hoping that as the new electric records of orchestras get more and more widely distributed, more and more people will become familiar with the orchestra, and so learn to like it. I imagine that if one could examine the sales of records during the last twenty years, one would find the preference for bands steadily declining all the time.

Since I wrote my remarks about Jan Kiepura at the beginning of this article I have been listening in to his singing at the Liederhalle in Stuttgart. He sang most beautifully the long piece about the Holy Grail from *Lohengrin*, and among his encores he gave *Che gelida manina* better than he gave it at the Albert Hall. He also gave the two arias from *Rigoletto*, one of which he had to repeat. The reception the audience accorded him was just as enthusiastic as it had been over here the week before, and one could not help being impressed by these volleys of German applause. Mr. Ernest Newman after listening to his first two songs at the B.B.C. concert and then retiring, because it was degenerating into a prima donna affair, expressed himself in *The Sunday Times* as woefully disappointed with the poor young man. That he has faults may be admitted, but he does not deserve to be dismissed as a pretender, apparently for the pleasure of snubbing the B.B.C. He may have a great deal of self-assurance, as Mr. Newman says; that is not surprising if he has been getting receptions all over Europe for the last two years such as he received in London, and as I heard to-night in Stuttgart; but all the self-assurance in the world cannot deprive him of a voice which, except in the lowest register, is genuinely a glorious voice. Nor can one or two faults of taste due to youthful exuberance detract



from the most naturally gifted singer I have heard for a long time. When youth becomes a bee in a middle aged man's bonnet he is sometimes apt to let it sting him too obviously. Well, I hope we shall find Kiepurá well recorded for the gramophone soon, and then we shall be able to judge his voice better.

Apropos of tenors I saw that John McCormack said the other day that Edward Johnson was the greatest living tenor. I have only one record of his—*Ch'ella mi creda libero e lontano* from *The Girl in the Golden West*, which is certainly magnificent. For some reason or another he has done hardly any records since. I should certainly like to hear him on new recording. Also apropos of the mediocre level of singing at the moment I think my readers may be interested in the following extract from a letter of Lady Elspeth Campbell:—

"I have a fairly good collection of Lieder and, being particularly fond of them, I made notes which were the most popular both in my small drawing-room and the hall here, which is about eighty feet high and wonderful for music. Under both conditions the singing of Paul Reimers came very easily first in the Victor record of *Auf Flügeln des Gesanges*, and *Wohin*, also *Du bist wie eine blume*—another Victor record, although the most popular of all is *Dimanche à l'aube*, also his singing. The German duets with Gluck are also charming. *Tom der Reimer* (Slezak) has been very popular, and Schumann-Heink's *Lorelei*. I am so sorry all my records of Schumann's *Wanderlied* are bad except Plançon's in French—nearly worn out, as I had it before I understood the proper care of records. Fritz Soot's *Nussbaum* is good, but the *Dopplegänger* side I don't like. Surely *Dopplegänger* is a Fetch like the Fetch in the Battle of Otterburn.

*I dreamed a dowie dream yestreen  
Ayont the Isle of Skye,  
I saw a dead man win a fight  
And I think that man was I.*

A wraith might be the likeness of anyone else, and a fetch always looks like oneself. Counterfeit is hopelessly wrong. To return to the subject of the most popular records with friends here. Those apart from the Reimers are *Lontano lontano* (Clement and Farrar), *Ave Maria* (Otello, Melba), *Ye banks and braes* (Melba), *Drink to me only with thine eyes* and *Dio Possente* (De Gogorza), *Plaisir d'amour* and Gounod's *Berceuse* (Calvé), *Steal away* (Robeson), and *Swing low sweet Chariot* (Fisk Choir)—a Victor record, *Le cor* (Plançon), *In Einem Kühlen grunde*, by Claire Dux (Brunswick), *La Vierge à la Crèche* (a very old Columbia record by Gilibert), and, owing to locality, the fine 12-in. record of *Mo dhachaidh* and *Cha Till* that was made by the H.M.V. people for the enterprising gramophone dealer in Oban, and also the Stornoway record. I think

all gramophone owners who heard those two records here have bought them. I have, of course, only touched on vocal music. The three favourite Caruso records are *Questa o Quella*, the serenade from *Don Pasquale*, and *Salut demeure*. Tamagno's death of Othello, and *Ora e per sempre*, old as they are, rouse more enthusiasm than any of the Caruso loud records. Almost every De Gogorza record in any language seems to be more popular than that of any operatic tenor. I don't find any of our guests who like Chaliapine as much as Plançon, where the same airs are sung by both men. The *Robert le Diable* record by Plançon to the wicked nuns, and *Les deux grenadiers* are the special records I refer to. I get some of my records from advice offered in the pages of THE GRAMOPHONE, but was somewhat chilled by receiving a horror ordered and waited for eagerly. This horror is the record of the *Otello Ave Maria* and *Salce*, by Ponselle. About as much expression as a barrel organ. My little dog would put more feeling into it. Melba's record, however, is lovely."

This list might serve as a list of records selected by myself, and I commend it to the attention of those who will take a little trouble to get the best.

I read with some dismay in THE GRAMOPHONE last month that the London office was depending on Golden Petmecky needles for their stock needle nowadays. I have found them mostly incapable of playing with any certainty two sides, let alone ten sides, and on several occasions I have found them curl up before they were through one side of a disc. I hope that their introduction doesn't mean that we are not going to have the original steel Petmecky any more. Although these may not be what they were, they still remain the most reliable needle on the market; but even these with new recording I should not dream of using more than four times, and I believe that is two too many.

While I was in London I had another go at the Panatrope at Imhof's, and on that instrument, as I had expected, the steel Petmecky needle scored a notable triumph. However, what interested me most in my last experience of the Panatrope, was the success it had with fibre needles. This seems to contradict the story of its wearing out records so rapidly. We played through, without changing the fibre, the whole of a movement of the Brahms quintet and the *scherzo* of the *Fifth* symphony. That is good enough. Another thing that interested me was that the Panatrope was much less successful with the later H.M.V. records which, on the new H.M.V. machine and Balmain's Big Bertha, we think so much better than the first electric records. This looks as if the H.M.V. people had very cleverly toned the new recording down to fit the capacity of their latest instrument, and I don't think anybody will blame them for doing so. At the same time I must point out, in justice to the Columbia



electric recording which some people think is lagging behind H.M.V., that on the Panatrope the Columbia electric recording sounded much better than the H.M.V., and indeed much more like the real orchestra than anything I have yet heard. However, these casual visits of mine must not be taken to express my final opinion on the Panatrope, because until I can really get to work on it down here, I am only giving voice to first impressions.

When the H.M.V. No. 4 soundbox appeared we all listened to the bass with much enthusiasm, with such enthusiasm indeed that some of the Expert Committee, who all of them have a feeling for the treble that touches chivalry, were inclined to think that the bass was being cultivated at the expense of the treble. By this time I am beginning to realise how little of the bass one does get even with an H.M.V. No. 4; and on the Radio how little one gets of the bass. One has only to play over the two splendid new records of Instruments of the Orchestra issued last month by H.M.V. to appreciate this. In order to get the equivalent of the piccolo from a double-bass one has to put one's head right inside the horn of Balmain's Big Bertha. In my daily increasing sense of the loss of the bass in gramophonic reproduction I have been rummaging among various soundboxes that in old days used to seem to give more of it. The Astra was the best of them, but I think it was only the best by taking some of the punch out of the treble, not by putting any punch into the bass, and after a day or two I returned to the No. 4 as the best all round performer with a steel needle. Over the question of fibre for new recording I am still in a state of indecision. I played through the new H.M.V. *Eroica* symphony with fibre, and decided definitely that steel was better. Then I played through the new *Ninth* symphony and came to a contrary decision. I had quite made up my mind that the Mendelssohn Concerto was better with fibre, and then the other afternoon I changed my mind and decided that it was really better with steel. I doubt very much if anybody who goes from one to the other will ever know which he likes better. It must be remembered that the genuine fibre devotee would as soon let a tiger in at his front door as a steel needle. He would as soon play with an assegai as a Petmecky. The fibres with which he plays are the very fibres of his being. He is as nervous of cold steel as an old lady. But I find, as I say, that I change from day to day, and whether my wobbling is a sign of weakness or strength of mind I leave the fanatics to decide.

I am glad to see that Mr. Percy Scholes' *First Book of the Gramophone Record* (Oxford University Press, 4s. 6d.) has gone into a second edition. No doubt most of our intelligent readers have already acquired this excellent work. The new edition

has many changes to keep pace with the improvements in recording, and anybody who wants to get the best out of his records and learn how to appreciate music is advised to lose no time in securing this book. Mr. Scholes is a guide . . . but need I paint the lily?

It looks as if I shall have to postpone my review of the Beethoven records till next month, for the special galleon chartered to bring the Columbia offering has not yet been sighted and the time of going to press draws near . . .

However, the mid-March H.M.V. records have arrived, and I shall have to retract some of my remarks about vocal records. Dusolina Giannini makes her debut on H.M.V. with two perfectly delightful folk songs—one Spanish Californian, the Mexican—and both as new as herself to the gramophone in this country. An enchanting disc. I had no sooner finished admiring Giannini than I had to admire Evelyn Scotney in much the best record she has yet given us. *Caller Herrin*, can surely never have been sung more sweetly, and the old Scots song *O whistle and I'll come to you* is sung just as well. Two really good soprano records in one bulletin. Things are looking up. And then I found the best record that Maartje Offers has given us. *Printemps qui commence* from *Samson et Dalila* on one side, *Connais-tu le pays* from *Mignon* on the other. This is singing of the genuine front rank. She is still called a contralto, but I still maintain that she is a mezzo-soprano. I never thought that I should like any vocal records better with fibre; but certainly fibre is the only fair thing to use for some voices on the new recording, which does occasionally give an edge that only fibre seems able to correct. I am positive that in the case of Maartje Offers a steel needle will be a mistake on any instrument. The fact is I am not yet convinced that electric recording has helped the individual voice very much. Yet the Parlophone recording is all right. I never have to bother about steel or fibre with Bettendorf. She sings like an angel for either.

The *Prince Igor* Overture conducted by Albert Coates does not seem to be quite up to standard as recording. Either that, or the East wind has got into my soundboxes. There are two impressive choral excerpts from *Die Meistersinger* by the Berlin State Opera orchestra under Leo Blech, and with Marek Weber deserting Parlophone for H.M.V. we shall soon have to put a dachshund in front of the gramophone. The only other record I shall mention is a particularly beautiful 12 in. violoncello record by Miss Beatrice Harrison.

The recording of the dances gets better and better, the dances themselves get worse and worse. But that's the way of the world at present in most directions. However, there is one dance I strongly recommend. *Sidewalk Blues* is a dreamy romantic



tune which I advise anybody who cares for a real old-fashioned dance to take the first opportunity of hearing.

### Beethoven.

Warned by the example of several distinguished literary men whose recent eulogies of Beethoven have sounded more like tributes to Pelmanism, I shall not venture to add one word to what has already been written about the great man himself. During this last month I have drawn nearer to him through those talks of Sir Walford Davies on the Radio than ever before, and I confess that when, the other night, he turned from the piano and put on a marvellous H.M.V. disc of Kreisler playing the Violin Concerto, I was not far from tears of gratitude for the way that sudden burst of divine music might be sounding in some of those little houses whose aeriols I always count from the train and for whose inmates I always beg, in passing, the grace of joy in beauty. In 1827, when Beethoven died, the children of England who in 1927 were listening at a concert to the Prometheus Overture might have been starved and naked slaves in mines, and I do not think that I shall be sentimental in claiming that without Beethoven men might have been even less merciful than they are.

In spite of the fact that London is unable to support Queen's Hall, the nation is apparently able to support more good music in gramophonic form than any other in the world. The threatened closing of Queen's Hall is attributed to the competition of Radio. There was never a more unworthy lie uttered.

What has made Queen's Hall unprosperous is the increase in the cost of upkeep, of which one of the most conspicuous items is the increased expense of the Orchestra itself. The only possible effect of Radio can be to add to concert audiences as many new lovers of music as it has added to the gramophone. We may admit that English people do not support opera. But why should they be blackguarded for that? Operas with very few exceptions provide a prehistoric kind of entertainment, and the English failure to support them may be really a mark of civilization. The Metropolitan Opera House of New York is not a sign of musical taste: it is an advertisement of material well-being. The departure of Eugene Goossens to America is not a sign that he is better appreciated there: he is imported like caviare or any other obviously expensive luxury. Read the Wireless programmes of the rest of the world (Germany excepted) if you suppose that other countries can support music. In spite of the musical superiority of America, an English messenger-boy last month took over for Columbia as personal luggage more good music in a few days than

America has produced in twenty-five years. Whatever our ignoble deficiencies in other directions our recording companies cannot be accused of any failure to do their duty by this centenary. They must have spent an enormous sum of money, for which they cannot possibly expect to recoup themselves, at any rate for a very long time. They have engaged the finest performers and given those performers the best possible reproductions. The performers themselves have played as if they believed Beethoven himself could hear them, as indeed, pray God, he can. My only regret is that comparatively so few people will be able to afford all these treasures. And next month I shall have the ungrateful task of sorting them out for the average reader.

But I must anticipate as far as to express my admiration for the latest Columbia recording. They seem to have hit on exactly the right place in the Scala Theatre. For many years I have been wondering what that Jonah's belly was intended for in the scheme of things, and here, at last, is the answer.

To all of you a Happy Easter.

COMPTON MACKENZIE.

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# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER

(Continued)

By HERMAN KLEIN

## The Singing of Lieder—IV.

I FIND I have not yet finished with available records of Schubert and Schumann. Since last month the Polydor company have sent over a large parcel of *Lieder* of their own selecting that includes a good many by these composers which were not at my disposal in time for the reviews in our February and March numbers. It is only fair that I should deal with them now before going on to other masters; they will help to make this study of the subject more complete, though even so, I cannot hope that it is anywhere near exhaustive. Naturally the Germans are ahead of us in this important department. Not alone are they satisfying a demand created by long and widespread familiarity with the songs themselves—the manifestation of an art which they had made their own decades before we as a musical nation began thinking about it—but they have at hand the right interpreters for the purpose, the singers specially trained in the difficult and superfine art of *Lieder* singing. I trust that ere long it will be in our power to say and do as much.

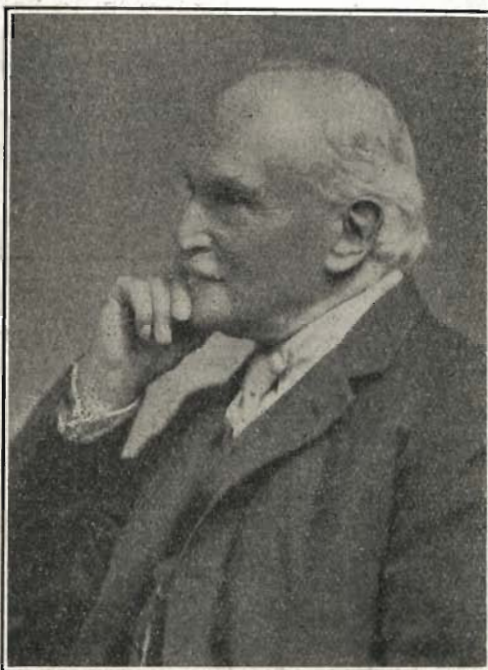
(Where the number only is quoted in this article it will be understood that the record is a Polydor.)

SCHUBERT (*supplementary*).

Two things this retrospect has enabled me to perceive: first, that the portions of the Continent now called Central Europe yield many more *Lieder* singers of the first rank than we have yet heard in that capacity in England; and, second, that it is quite immaterial to which sex the singer belongs—a particular *Lied* is not regarded as the particular property of either. I do not say we have not followed the latter custom to a certain extent, but I have frequently noted the existence of a dividing line where there is no need whatever for it. The question is at least as much one of

vocal suitability. For example, there is no reason why Fritz Soot (62550) should not appropriate *An die Musik* as rightfully as Mme. Gerhardt (already reviewed); only unluckily in this case the tenor is not heard at his best, the voice being rough and the sentiment overdone, while doubtful intonation and a poor piano do the rest. The *Erl-König* again offers another "neutral" theme,

though I confess to liking it best in a man's voice; and it would be hard to find a smoother rendering than this of H. Rehkemper's (66006), a high baritone of unusual merit. Besides being dramatic, he displays admirable diction with a tone of pleasing quality, and happily is favoured with a first-rate accompanist. On the reverse side he gives an equally good account of *Orpheus*, one of Schubert's comparatively unknown songs (composed 1816, words by Jacobi), wherein the master-lutenist informs the unwilling Furies how much nicer things are on earth than in the infernal regions. His melody, being nearly as persuasive as that in Gluck's opera, deserves to be as universally familiar as a good record can make it.



HERMAN KLEIN

Two gems, *Heidenröslein* and *Die Forelle*, are presented both on the same disc, in German by Jenny Jungbauer (62478) and in English by W. F. Watt (Columbia 4220). The combination is rather a coincidence but not unwelcome, for both singers have pretty voices. I vote for the lady's as the better performance. Lovely tone and exquisitely tender feeling are associated with a scratchy record and a metallic pianoforte in Maria Olczewska's beautiful delivery of the *Kreuzzug* (72814). Leo Slezák I have always admired in opera for his intelligence, his romantic feeling, and the dramatic significance of his impersonation. These qualities stand him in good stead as a *Lieder* singer, and in my estimation he now stands as high in the one sphere as in the other, while his popularity is



partly evidenced by the extent of his output. For my part I do not want to hear a more perfect or more poetic diction, better phrasing, an apter sense of colourful contrast, clearer rhythm, or greater depth and purity of expression. His Schumann records come later; meanwhile, the attributes just named are abundantly displayed in the wonderful song entitled *Trockene Blumen* (62423), the 18th of the *Schöne Müllerin* cycle. English basses who love *Der Wanderer* will discover an ideal model in Paul Bender's fine example (65575), though few will be able to imitate his rich deep tone, or sing it in the key that he does, taking him down at the end to a splendid low D flat. Rehkemper's *Wohin?* is notable for its neat, clean enunciation, vivacious manner, and an unimpeachable *legato*.

#### SCHUMANN (supplementary).

*Der Hidalgo*, with its bold *bolero* rhythm, breathes in tuneful melody the Spanish atmosphere of Geibel's poem—a picture of the real old Seville life before the builder and the taxi-driver began their nefarious modern crusade. This kind of thing suits F. Soot (\*62550) much better than *An die Musik*, and with plenty of *verve* and swing he makes a capital record of it. The same song is done in a lower key by H. Rehkemper (62476), who imparts to it a rather more varied style generally; but both are good. Another difficult choice, which perhaps the question of sex—contralto or tenor—will best decide, lies between the *Mondnacht* of Maria Olczewska (70653) and that of Leo Slezák (65775), who both make the famous little song sound like what it is—a lovely work of art.

The former adds to the value of hers by giving on the other side a superb rendering of the equally famous *Frühlingsnacht*, taking it at terrific speed as though suddenly letting loose the rush of an emotional torrent. There is only one drawback: these records already "date," and they are undeniably scratchy. Less open to criticism on the same account are Leo Slezák's *Der Nussbaum* (\*62423) and *Die Lotosblume* (62424), which I have never heard surpassed for sheer delicacy and beauty of treatment. Poetry and music alike stand out in classic relief. Finally, I have listened with approval to yet another German record of *Die beiden Grenadiere* (66007), by the basso, Theodor Scheidl, whose sonorous tones bring the story out with convincing ease and sincerity. His tempo may drag somewhat (a Teutonic fault of the day), but one feels the deep sentiment and, even better, the definite marching step.

#### BRAHMS.

Johannes Brahms—born at Hamburg in May, 1833, died at Vienna in April, 1897—worthily carried on the line of the great German song-composers in succession to Schubert and Schumann.

Like them, he was a prolific and masterly writer for the voice, an inspired melodist, and the inventor of a thoroughly original style. You cannot mistake the music of Brahms, once you have grown familiar with and learned to love his strongly-marked mannerisms, his delightful harmonies and modulations. He can be, and for the most part is, alternately rugged and tender, ponderous and soulful, dreamily poetic and energetically virile. Whatever the words, they bring out the music which fits them and which expresses precisely the emotion that they "yearn for," as Wagner put it. Very few of his songs have been recorded in this country, but, thanks to the Polydor parcel, I can now proceed to deal briefly with what may be considered on the whole a fairly representative collection of the Brahmsian output.

First, then, *mirabile dictu*, a creditable English record of *An eine Aeolsharfe* (*To an Aeolian harp*, Columbia 3364), by Glanville Davies, a light baritone with a tenor quality. He pours out the stream of gracious melody with freedom and apparent enjoyment. The song belongs to a set of five written in 1862 and marked Op. 19; it is a characteristic early example. Much better known and infinitely lovelier is the *Feldeinsamkeit*, Op. 86, written twenty years later to a poem by Hermann Almers, depicting the sensations of one lying prone and gazing skywards amid the summer heat in a grassy meadow at midday. There are three records of it—by John McCormack (H.M.V. D.A.635), rather *blanche* but sweetly phrased; by Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion A.0216), with a wonderful smoothness and even *sostenuto* revealing the singer at her best; and the other, not so faultless, by Leo Slezák (\*Polydor 65775), rather tremulous and lacking in the sense of utter repose, but a model of perfect diction. Of the three, the Gerhardt is the one to have.

*Immer leiser wird mein Schlummer* is a cry from a death-bed, a despairing appeal for the loved one to come before it is too late, glorified by music of exquisite sadness. Composed in 1889, Op. 105, to lines by Hermann Sing, its pessimistic cry of anguish is truly reflected in a fine record by Maria Olczewska (\*Polydor 72814), the tone and effect being absolutely perfect, save for a slight "hooting" on certain vowels in the medium, intensified, maybe, by the recording horn of prehistoric days. The rich low notes are a joy. The accompanist however, hurries the intervening piano passages.

In *Komm bald* we find one of those simple tunes which Brahms apparently took from an old *volkslied* and harmonized after his own inimitable manner. It is, however, entirely original, and peculiar to his later period (1886, Op. 97), while John McCormack (\*H.M.V. D.A.635), imparts to it more real charm than to *Feldeinsamkeit*, which is on the same disc. He is better still, though—using a



darker, more manly tone—in (H.M.V. D.A.628) the enchanting *Die Mainacht*, Op. 43, which was written to Hölty's poetic lines in 1868. The latter disc also includes the Irish tenor's excellent rendering of *In Waldeinsamkeit*, another long-drawn melody (Op. 85, published in 1882), with a delicious coda about the *Nachtigall*. But singers love *Die Mainacht*, and no wonder Muriel Brunskill (Columbia 977), puts heart and soul into every note of it, an orchestra supporting, though not necessarily improving her effort. Sigrid Onegin (Polydor 72687), a gifted mezzo-contralto with a splendid organ, also sings it with admirable breath-control and deep feeling. She shines to advantage in tearful *lieder*, and one of these, *Nicht mehr zu dir zu gehen* (Polydor 70615), I have to thank her for hearing; it breathes the very spirit of desolation and is an early song, Op. 32, to words by Daumer.

*Sandmännchen* (*The Sand-Man*), is still earlier, being one of the *Volks-Kinderlieder* composed in 1858 and well known here. It is nicely sung by Constance Willis (Vocalion X.9526) and Vera Devna (Beltona, 6042). Next comes the glorious *Sapphische Ode*, Op. 94, written in 1884 to lines by Hans Schmidt. This gem of poetic melody is recorded by five famous singers, each in a different key, viz., Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion A.0220), Kirkby Lunn (H.M.V., D.A.597), Schumann-Heink (H.M.V., D.A.525), Sigrid Onegin (Polydor 72714), and Frieda Hempel (Polydor 85299). The most satisfying to my ear are the second and third; both admirable in tone-colour, diction and restrained passion. No. 1 is too slow, No. 4 is over-slurred, and No. 5, though very sweet, lacks breadth. The *Ständchen* or *Serenade* (Op. 106, published 1889), is vigorously rendered by Leo Slezák (Polydor 62424); while the more humorous and clever *Vergebliches Ständchen* (1882, Op. 84), a delicious setting of a Lower Rhine folk-song, is warbled with infinite grace and spirit by the diligent Elena Gerhardt (Vocalion B.3115).

Towards the close of his busy life, Brahms composed (April—May, 1896), his *Vier ernste Gesänge*, Op. 121 (*Four Serious Songs*), to biblical texts, "of which three treat of the universality and bitterness of death, only yielding to consolatory thoughts in that death appears as the angel of deliverance from poverty and all affliction." It is not true that they embodied a presentiment of his approaching end; for when showing the MS. to a friend he remarked simply, "This is what I have given myself for my birthday." Anyhow, they are extremely beautiful. Properly speaking, they should be restricted to the bass voice for which they were written; but there is no reason why a contralto should not sing them, and as recorded by Sigrid Onegin (Polydor 72919-20), I must say they are profoundly moving. The gifted artist obtains all the necessary contrasts of colour and

feeling so remarkable in these songs, ranging as they do from deep devotional expression to moments of sheer dramatic power and quaint outbursts of sober joyousness unlike all the rest. This fine achievement might well be imitated—closely imitated, I mean—by any British basso able and willing to undertake the task of recording the *Serious Songs* in English. The orchestral accompaniments are capably handled.

The magnificent *Von ewiger Liebe* is, I suppose, among the best known of Brahms's *lieder*. I was quite a young man when I heard it sung at the old "Pops" for the first time in this country, and shall never forget the impression it made on me. The poet, Joseph Wenzig, provides a simple picture of a man and a maid comparing notes, as it were, about the significance of "enduring love" as they each understand it. It is just the difference of viewpoint that life has portrayed since the struggle betwixt constancy and "free love" first began. Brahms wrote his masterly setting in 1868 (Op. 43), and the two available records are by Elena Gerhardt (\*H.M.V., D.B.848), and Sigrid Onegin (Polydor 72687). I prefer the former for its greater brightness, variety and clarity of dramatic perception. Frequent changes of tempo and tone-colour, together with strongly articulated syllables and effective characterization, combine to make it a genuine piece of interpretation. The recording of voice and accompaniment is excellent.

If I am not mistaken, the popular *Wiegenlied* (1868, Op. 49) was first sung in London by Mme. Albani. Present records of this most soothing of cradle-songs are those of Elsie Francis-Fisher (\*Aco. G.15937), which is quite nice; of Ernestine Schumann-Heink (\*H.M.V., D.A.525), which glows with maternal warmth; and of Julia Culp (H.M.V., D.A.151), which gently deposits you in the land of dreams. You must take your choice.

Considerations of space compel me to leave over my concluding article on *lieder* until next month.

HERMAN KLEIN.



## TRANSLATIONS OF LIEDER.

*Note.*—For list of some translations of Schubert's songs see February issue, page 399. The following songs of Schumann have appeared in THE GRAMOPHONE:—

*Der Nussbaum*—I., August, 1923, supplement.  
*Die beide Grenadiere*—I., June, 1923, supplement.  
*Die Lotosblume*—III., 51.  
*Du bist wie eine Blume*—III., 51.  
*Widmung (Du meine Seele)*—II., 57.

And of Brahms:—

*Die Mainacht*—II., 98.  
*Feldeinsamkeit*—II., 175.  
*Immer leiser*—III., 542.  
*Sapphische Ode*—II., 296.  
*Wiegenlied*—II., 296.



# NEGLECTED COMPOSERS

By W. A. CHISLETT

## IV.—Frederick Delius

**I**N spite of the fact that Frederick Delius is the son of naturalised German parents and has spent the major portion of his life since the age of twenty-five in France, much of his music is as full of the spirit of England as that of Elgar, Vaughan Williams or Bantock. It is surprising, therefore, that he was appreciated abroad in comparative youth, particularly in Germany (in which country a monograph was published in 1907), while recognition in his native land was so tardy that he was a middle-aged man before he became known at all generally. An illustration of the neglect to which he is subjected by his countrymen will be found on reference to Mr. Davy's "History of English Music" published in 1920, in which he is dismissed in the following terms:—"F. Delius, of German parentage, is highly esteemed by many."

Frederick Delius was born at Bradford on January 29th 1863, and was educated at the Grammar School in that city and at the International College, Spring Grove, Isleworth. After spending three years in business, the youth, at the age of nineteen, persuaded his father to buy an orange grove in Florida. The life of a planter proved much more congenial, and the constant touch with the negroes of that country was doubtless the source upon which he drew in after years, when writing such works as "Appalachia," a symphonic poem for orchestra and male voice chorus. During this period his development was carefully fostered by Mr. T. F. Ward, an accomplished musician, and Delius soon determined, in opposition to the wishes of his parents, to adopt music as a career. With this end in view, in 1885 he secured a post as music teacher in Danville,

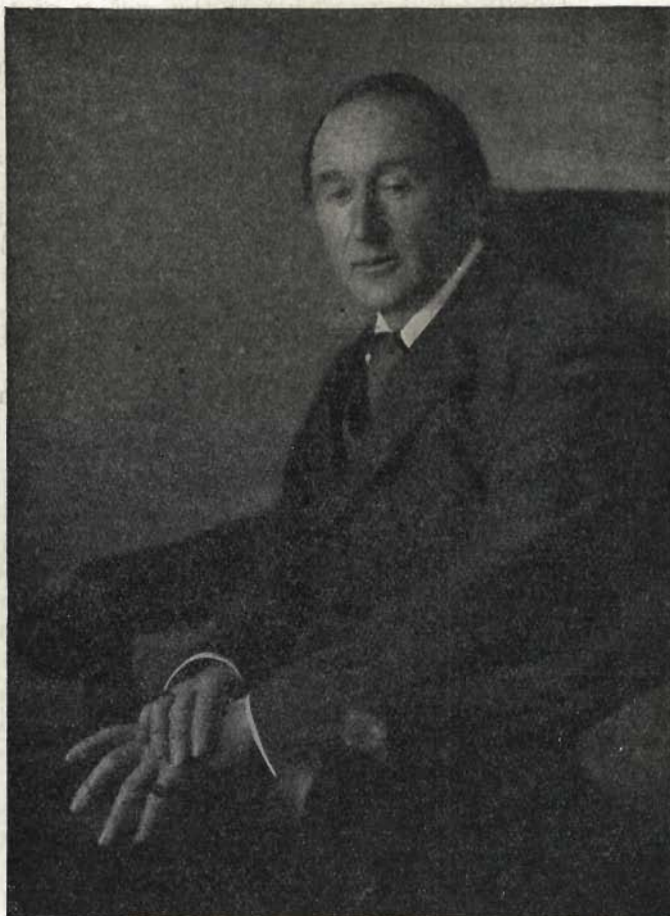
Virginia, and was so successful in this capacity that, after a few months, he decided to take the final plunge and went to Germany, where he entered the Leipsig Conservatoire. Here he met Grieg, who was living in the town at the time, and to whom he afterwards paid a visit in Norway.

This association was, as might be expected, beneficial, and traces of Grieg's influence can be found in much of the younger man's music, particularly in his earlier works. Shortly after leaving Leipsig Delius decided to settle in France, in which country he has lived ever since; his permanent home, since 1897, having been at Grez-sur-Loing, an old market town.

Delius is, and always has been, very critical of his own work, and although he wrote much, nothing was published or performed publicly until he had reached maturity. Julius Butts and Hans Haym were the first to recognise his powers, and soon after they had given performances of his works in Dusseldorf and Elberfeld respectively, the same were repeated in Berlin by such conductors as Oskar Fried and Fritz Cassirer.

The first performances of

any of his works in England was on May 30th, 1899, on which date he gave a concert of his own works in London. In spite of the favourable press notices on this occasion, nothing further was heard of him until 1907, when Cassirer gave the first English performance of "Appalachia" and Sir Henry Wood and Szanto that of the Piano Concerto. In the interim we find that Germany had come to realise his genius to such an extent as to produce "Appalachia" at the Lower Rhine Musical Festival in 1905 and "Sea Drift," a work for baritone solo, chorus and





orchestra, at the Tonkünstlerfest of the combined German musical societies held in 1906. "Sea Drift" was produced at the Sheffield Festival of 1908, and this performance marks the commencement of Sir Thomas Beecham's enthusiastic advocacy. During the next dozen years Sir Thomas gave performances of many of Delius's works throughout England, including the first performance in this country of the opera, "A Village Romeo and Juliet," at Covent Garden Theatre in 1910 and its revival there in 1920, and it is largely owing to the delicate, sensitive and authoritative interpretations by Sir Thomas that these works have at last gained some of the appreciation that is their due.

It is difficult to assign any definite place to Delius, or to compare his music with that of any contemporary composer, as his individuality is so assertive and has been ever since his first works were published. It possesses mystical and spiritual qualities in a high degree and, his life having been spent in close communion with nature, this also is reflected in many of his works. Appended to the score of "In a Summer Garden" by way of introduction is the following quotation from Dante Gabriel Rossetti:—

"All are my blooms; and all sweet blooms of love  
To thee I gave while spring and summer sang"

but as if these two lines do not convey sufficiently the atmosphere that is desired, he adds "Roses, lilies, a thousand scented flowers. Many-coloured butterflies flitting, and gold brown bees humming in the warm, quivering summer air. Under old shady trees a quiet stream, with white water-lilies. Two people, almost hidden, in a boat. A thrush singing in the distance." The picture portrayed by the music, however, is not in any sense imitative, but is more the reflective state of mind engendered by the contemplation of nature by one in intimate touch with the realities of life.

Similarly those delightful miniatures *On first hearing the Cuckoo in Spring* (H.M.V., D.800; Voc. K.05181) and *A Song before Sunrise* (Voc. K.05181) convey atmosphere rather than reality. For this reason and because of his intense intellectuality his best works are those dealing with great and abstract subjects. He has written many songs, but they cannot be ranked with his best work and, although he has composed some fine instrumental music, his finest work is done when writing for an orchestra, either alone or with a chorus or solo instrument.

Full use of modern orchestral resources is made by Delius when the character of the music requires big tonal effects, but he does not hesitate to use a small combination when such will express his thoughts more adequately. *On first hearing the Cuckoo in Spring* is only orchestrated for 2 flutes, oboe, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 horns and

the usual strings. On the other hand the score of *Brigg Fair* (H.M.V., D.799 and D.800) contains parts for 3 flutes, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets and bass clarinet, 3 bassoons and double bassoon, 6 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, harp, tubular bells, 3 tympani, bass drum and strings. This large force is not employed, as many people imagine, from the title, to suggest the noisy fair of roundabouts, cocoanut shies, etc. *Brigg Fair* derives its name from a Lincolnshire folk song and the piece, called an English rhapsody, is in the nature of a set of variations on this air. Of the other recorded orchestral works *A Dance Rhapsody* (Col. L.1505 and L.1506) is the most important and best, although disfigured by cuts. This is the earlier of the two dance rhapsodies, and is written for a large orchestra, and the amous description of Beethoven's 7th Symphony might well be applied to it. It is the "apotheosis of the spirit of the dance."

Of the two examples of chamber music recorded, the *Sonata for 'Cello and Piano* (H.M.V., D.1103-4) is by far the more individual and characteristic and fortunately also the finer recording. This work (which dates from 1917) is in one movement, rhapsodical in character, and based on one broad sweeping melody. In his review on the first issue of these records, N. P. said that it "will attract those who love this composer's music as much as it will repel those to whom the long linked sweetness of his day dreams make no appeal." I was, at the time, unable to understand this opinion and felt it to be quite wrong, as this work has always seemed to me to be comparatively easy to understand. To test this opinion I have carried out experiments extending over several months, and am now more certain than ever that N. P. is mistaken. I have played these records over many times to friends possessed of very varied musical tastes and appetites, including one or two who had previously expressed themselves as quite unable to appreciate Delius's genius and also one or two who can only be described as musically ignorant. In practically all cases this music has made an instant appeal, and in every case in which it has appealed appreciation has grown at each playing. I personally regard these records as an ideal starting point for anyone who wishes to become acquainted with Delius's work. On the other hand the *Violin Sonata No. 2* (Col. D.1500-1)—which is also in one movement form—is not in the composer's best vein, and although beautifully played by Albert Sammons and Evelyn Howard-Jones, they cannot conceal the fact that much of it is rather dull.

The only other records are *Twilight Fancies* and *Sweet Venevil*, sung by Leila Megane (H.M.V., E. 430); *To Daffodils* sung by Muriel Brunskill (Col. 3876); and those of selections from



the incidental music to "Hassan," an Eastern play by James Elroy Flecker (H.M.V., C.1134 and C.1135). The latter music was written in 1920 and 1921, and the play produced at His Majesty's Theatre, London, in 1923. In order to obtain the necessary Oriental colour, Delius has sacrificed his intellectual and spiritual character, and so far, I have been quite unable to enthuse over this music when away from its stage setting.

It is very good to know that we may expect from the National Gramophonic Society at an early date one of the shorter orchestral pieces, and it is to be hoped that the recording companies will give us others together with one of the major choral works such as "Appalachia," "On the High Hills" or the superb "Sea Drift" and the glorious "Cello Concerto."

W. A. CHISLETT.

The record containing Delius's *Summer Night on the River* (N.G.S. 72) is now available for all members of the National Gramophonic Society.



## COMPETITIONS

Two competitions, BOTH CLOSING ON JUNE 1ST, were announced in the last number, page 405.

A coupon, which must accompany each entry, was given in March (page xxix), and will be found in this number (p. xxix) and will be repeated in the May number.

*Competition A.*—Cash prizes of Five Pounds (first) and Three Pounds (second), and Six Consolation Prizes (copies of "Music and the Gramophone") are offered for the winning LIST OF TWENTY BEST TUNES.

A note on the object of this competition appeared last month, begging *all* our readers to enter for it and to treat it with real care and absolute independence of taste. In answer to some correspondents, who ask what is meant by "a tune," we would suggest that every competitor should read the list of "the greatest melodies in the world" given in Mr. John E. Kite's letter on page 391 of the February number, and should then get to work compiling her or his list on those lines.

*Competition B.*—For Overseas Readers only.—Three Pounds' Worth of Records (winner's choice) and Four Consolation Prizes (copies of "Music and the Gramophone") are offered for the best description in not more than 300 words of GOOD OVERSEAS RECORD SERVICE.

The object of this competition is to discover how our Overseas Readers choose their records and how they get them; whether the records are supplied by a local agent or ordered straight from England, and from what firm; and whether the service is prompt and whether the records arrive in good condition.

We shall ask the winning firm in this competition to make a present of a record to everyone of its clients who sends an entry.

All entries should be addressed to the Editor, THE GRAMOPHONE, 58, Frith Street, London W.1, and should be marked "Competitions" in the left-hand top corner of the envelope.

The Editor's decision will be final.

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# UNRECORDED CHAMBER MUSIC

*By* WILLIAM MEADMORE

**D**ESPITE the recent lavish recording of chamber music by the English gramophone companies the gramophonist's library of chamber music is still much in the embryonic stage. This is not surprising, for whilst much has been done there remain vast (but charted!) seas for the companies to dive into and produce new treasures for the gramophonist. But it is gratifying that the nucleus of a representative collection is now an accomplished fact—no small thanks are due to the companies concerned and to the N.G.S.—and is, in fact, being enlarged by the addition of one or more works nearly every month. But much yet remains to be done. It is well worth while, for signs and portents are not lacking that gramophonists are not only developing an enthusiasm for this rarified music, but are also realising that the gramophone actually is an ideal medium for its representation. I have particularly in mind the fact that chamber music can be ideally heard via the gramophone, for the gramophonist has but to lock his door and he is tolerably safe from extraneous noises—unless his instrument is of the archaic type. He is at least secure from the pests of the concert room—the latecomers, the shufflers, whisperers, knitters and the programme rustlers! Chamber music has been well described as the music of friends and is certainly better heard in one's home.

Quite rightly the companies have so far mainly confined their energies to Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. These three composers are the fulcrum of chamber music, and moreover their music is the finest introduction that the gramophonist (or anybody else) could have to the medium. But these composers have (judging by the columns of *THE GRAMOPHONE*) made so many converts that they can for the moment afford to rest on their laurels. It is undoubtedly through their influence that many readers are now beginning to realise that this love of chamber music is an insidious infection, that, once caught, must be satisfied whether the pocket be jingling or not! It is obvious that sooner or later all Beethoven's chamber music will be fully recorded, and the fact that this year marks the centenary of the composer's death is being signalled by an almost formidable output on the part of the companies. But I do not propose in this article to make many suggestions with regard to these three composers, but rather to indicate other composers' work which the companies might do well to explore.

As yet recordings have chiefly been confined to the strict quartet form, comprising the ensemble of two violins, viola and 'cello. The bigger (but not necessarily better) or the more uncommon grouping of instruments such as the nonet, octet, septet or sextet have barely been touched. No recording of a nonet or an octet has yet been made although there are two outstanding examples of what has and can be done in this direction. Indeed, one of the finest works in all music is the Schubert octet written for two violins, viola, 'cello, double bass, clarinet, bassoon and horn. It is a powerful and, needless to say, melodious composition, but alas! it cannot possibly be performed under fifty-five minutes, even then with many of the repeats omitted, and this would mean seven records. But if the companies would like to experiment in this direction there is the Mendelssohn octet in E flat (Op. 20) which could easily be fitted on to four records. Here the instruments are those of the ordinary string quartet doubled. There are omens that Mendelssohn is coming back to favour again, the contemptuous references to his "sugary" style are obviously the production of those minds which have but the meagrest knowledge of his work, and one has only to listen to this octet to realise that the boy—for Mendelssohn was only fifteen or sixteen at the time of its composition—had a depth of feeling, which he could express, not only with sentiment, but with fire as well. The Scherzo is most original. Its graceful and airy spirit is indicated by the quotation from "Faust" beginning "Floating cloud and trailing mist," which serves as a motto for the movement. Spohr has also written a charming double quartet; he also is curiously "tabooed" in this age, but this particular work is frequently performed at South Place and always enjoyed. It takes thirty-two minutes and so could be pressed on four records. The Schubert and the Mendelssohn are the outstanding octets (except for the Beethoven wind octet, Op. 103), but Svendsen, Gade, Glière and Malling have also written works for eight instruments, but they are not very thrilling! incidentally there are one or two nonets in existence, notably those by Rheinberger and Spohr, but these again are actually of little account.

I have heard few works in the septet form. The lovely Ravel example has already been well recorded except for some occasional lapses on the part of the harp (in passing: if it were not for the



obstinate harp which still has its bad patches even with modern recording, I would certainly and wholeheartedly recommend the lovely Bax harp quintet to the companies). The Beethoven Septet for wind and strings (Op. 20) is a long work occupying some forty-three minutes, but a recording of this is bound to come. (Incidentally, I am surprised that it has not been recorded in connection with the array of Centennial records). Otherwise the only other septet I have heard is the one by the contemporary Dutch composer, B. Hollander.

Of sextets it has been left to the N.G.S. to supply us with the only recorded examples—the Brahms and the Schönberg. There is perhaps not a large field to explore here, but the Dvořák Sextet in A, Op. 48, is certainly worthy of mention. This work incidentally was the first piece of Dvořák's chamber music to be played in England. The composer's marked predilection for meaty tunes is at once apparent from the principal subject of the opening movement—an ear-haunting melody. The second movement is also most characteristic of the composer—a Dumka, and here again is a tune that one is hardly likely to forget. The Furiant which follows (taking the place of the usual Scherzo or Minuet) is all bustle and animation, but is well contrasted by the last movement which consists of an air and variations, and is full of charming music and unexpected twists. The Sextet takes thirty-two minutes in performance.

The works so far discussed belong to the more rarely explored paths of chamber music. Quintets, quartets and trios are undoubtedly the more popular with composers and indeed are not only the mainstay, but the most commonly heard expressions of the genre. It is somewhat surprising to find that only one Piano Quintet (outside the activities of the N.G.S.) has been issued, a noble work, however—the Schumann Op. 44. It has been splendidly recorded by two separate companies, more's the pity, for it would have been much more to the point to have had two Piano Quintets instead of two interpretations of one. It is unfortunate that possibly the two finest examples of the Piano Quintet both take forty minutes in performance, which would necessitate five records. The Brahms Quintet in F minor, Op. 34, although an early work, is most remarkable. The orchestral-like Scherzo is one of the finest movements he ever wrote, and the Andante contains some of the most solemn and moving passages in all music.\* It is significant that this work and

the Franck Quintet were selected by the popular vote of the South Place audiences for the first two annual plebiscite concerts, so there can be no possible shadow of a doubt whatever as to their popularity! I have used the word popular purposely because I gather from the pages of THE GRAMOPHONE that the Franck Quartet does not seem to be meeting with that favour which was anticipated, and I feel that this may re-act prejudicially against the Quintet. I was somewhat surprised at the time that the H.M.V. had issued the Quartet in preference to the Quintet. It was like putting the cart before the horse; the attractive Quintet seems to lead naturally to the Quartet and the Franck idiom can so much more easily be mastered in the earlier work. The Quartet does require several hearings before one begins to see daylight; it is a compact work and the threads, once lost, are difficult to pick up again. It is like reading one of those long novels by Dostoevsky, such as the Brothers Karamasov; if one doesn't get the hang of the thing at once, there are many false starts and an inclination to get discouraged. If perseverance is required, one is, at least, well rewarded in the end by that sudden glow of enthusiasm which comes with understanding and appreciation. All this effort is certainly not necessary with the Quintet, for its fascinating beauty enchants at the very first hearing. Written in 1880 it was the first of those masterpieces which occupied the last and the great period of the composer's creative activities. It was dedicated to Saint-Saëns who was at the piano when it was first publicly performed. Incidentally, there is a Columbia record of the slow movement perfectly played by the Lener Quartet and Olga Loeser Lebert. But why not the whole of the work? But one must be grateful for small mercies and this particularly splendid record.

The Dvořák Quintet in A (Op. 81) should by no means be overlooked, more particularly (from the gramophone point of view) as it can be recorded on four records. The Columbia many years ago issued one record of snippets from two movements. Even this was delightful. The Quintet is highly characteristic of the composer, replete with national feeling, and with a first movement that is indeed masterly. The variety of colouring, the copiousness of the subject matter and the ingenuity displayed throughout the Quintet in the working out, are all significant of the composer at the height of his powers. Coleridge-Taylor has written a very charming Quintet (F sharp minor) for clarinet and strings. Like the Dvořák, it is also built up on many haunting folk songs, in this case African in origin. An average performance occupies twenty-eight minutes.

W. MEADMORE.

(To be continued).

\*Since this article was written the H.M.V. have satisfied even the most fastidious with a splendid recording of this Quintet and that with a combination that hardly could be bettered—Harold Bauer and the Flonzaley Quartet. I have, however, let the note stand hoping that it will serve as a reminder that the Brahms Quintet is available.



## BEETHOVEN (Died March, 1827)

*In him the human spirit, breaking free  
From chaos, won new stature and new pride ;  
Shining and singing, made one further stride  
Towards its eventual divinity.*

STANLEY SNAITH

# Analytical Notes and First Reviews

## THE COLUMBIA BEETHOVEN RECORDS

Anyone who has glanced at the middle pages of the March GRAMOPHONE will have seen that Columbia are celebrating Beethoven's centenary with something like an orgy of his music. But cold type (even in the hands of a skilful advertiser) cannot possibly do justice to the splendour of their achievement. All the nine symphonies, an overture, twelve quartets, a piano trio, and three sonatas—anybody can write these words; but it will be a long time before we can realise what they signify. I have now been at work on them for about four days, hearing them and making notes, and I have just managed to listen to each record through once! And on the strength of that single hearing I must now write, for the printer is becoming impatient. My review will be "first impressions" with a vengeance. But some notice these records must have in the April number, and if I turn out to be sometimes wide of the mark, I must ask for forbearance. I hear that the Editor is to write a more carefully considered article at a later date. The cautious had better await his opinion.

I am anxious to save space, and am, therefore, omitting here the exact titles of the records and their price. Details of artists, conductors, record numbers, etc., will be found on the middle page of the March number, and to this I refer readers. And I must also eschew analysis. All the biggest works are issued in albums containing a printed description of the music; the others will provide good material on which analytical gramophiles can exercise themselves.

Taking the list as a whole, I find that one or two things stand out clearly. In the first place the piano is a nuisance; it never records as well as strings or wind, and Beethoven's rugged (and sometimes clumsy) method of writing for it is just the kind of thing that bothers my No. 4 sound-box most. In a solo one can put up with it, but when it is combined with strings the effect cannot compare with that of a string quartet.

Secondly, these records bear out the general opinion I had formed of Columbia new recordings. In power and brilliance they are a little behind H.M.V. (though in front of everyone else); it is, I think, the solidity of the H.M.V. bass that accounts for most of the difference. But what they lose in volume they make up for in clearness, and their string tone can be of a velvet-like softness and smoothness. Consequently I prefer H.M.V. in the symphonies, where a certain epic quality is generally required, though it must be remembered that H.M.V. have as yet given us only the *Eroica*, the fifth, and the ninth by the new process. But in the quartets Columbia is well ahead. Not only is their style of reproduction almost ideally suited to this kind of music, but the finished renderings of the *Lener* quartet are in these works generally better than those of the *Virtuoso*, very good though the *Virtuoso* often is.

Every single one of the works recorded is complete (I have checked them throughout from the scores). Some of the repeats are not observed, it is true, but then we seldom get all these even at concert performances, and I, for one, will gladly dispense with a good many. In making their selection of repeats, Columbia have naturally been influenced by the requirements of the twelve-inch records, but on the whole they have chosen wisely. I have a small bone to pick with them regarding the breaks in the quartets, which have sometimes showed too much respect for the analyst and his bar-lines and too little for the natural flow of the music—it is

annoying to be left stranded before the final note of a cadence; but the quartets are so good on the whole that I feel it ungenerous to insist on this trifling—and only occasional—blemish.

The account of the works that I shall now give is based on a hearing of them as given by my table grand H.M.V. machine with a No. 4 sound-box. For the symphonies I used a loud steel needle, as I wanted to get the full weight of the performances, but I made an exception of the eighth symphony, using for this more lyrical work a medium steel. The effect of the loud needle in my smallish room was rather overwhelming at times, and possibly I should have done better to employ the medium, which gives excellent results, more often. But this is a matter of taste. For the works in which the piano has a share I always used a medium needle. I have already referred to my prejudice against this instrument in recorded chamber music, so I will say no more. The quartets would, I fancy, sound well with almost any needle, and here the size of the instrument and of the room will probably be the deciding factors. Volume is not generally an essential element in a quartet; what one wants is clarity. To this rule, however, I make one exception, the quartet, Op. 95. Here I used a medium needle, and the smooth surface, the mellow quality of the recording, and the polished ease of the performance combined to deprive the music of that starkness which I feel sure Beethoven wanted in a great many places. A loud needle might have made a lot of difference.

### SYMPHONIES.

Sir George Henschel has secured a sound if not very thrilling performance of the youthful *First Symphony* (Op. 21) on three records. The reproduction is excellent in the first movement and nearly as good in the *Scherzo* and *Finale*. In the slow movement the strings sound just a little harsh—perhaps a medium needle would have improved matters.

Sir Thomas Beecham's interpretation of the *Second Symphony* is famous, and I feel shy of criticising it. But I cannot help thinking that he takes the first movement too fast. The first subject becomes very indistinct at this speed—on my machine, at any rate. But the other movements are excellent, and Sir Thomas is marvellously vivid in his treatment of such dramatic movements as the end of the *Finale*. In this symphony again I suggest experimenting with a medium needle.

Sir Henry Wood is less thrilling than Coates in the *Eroica*, and the general effect is less massive than in the H.M.V. version. But on the other hand the details are perhaps rather clearer. This *Eroica* occupies 14 sides as against the H.M.V. 12. This is partly due to the conducting, which is less impetuous; Sir Henry keeps a very steady beat, only allowing himself one marked *rubato*,—in the second subject of the first movement. But it must also be said that some of the sides are just a bit short.

I should not be surprised if the *Fourth Symphony* was particularly difficult to record. There are a lot of delicate passages for solo wood-wind, *pizzicato* strings, etc., which present difficult problems of balance. Consequently I did not expect absolute perfection. Columbia and Sir Hamilton Harty have done well; there are moments when the detail in the wood-wind does not tell sufficiently, and the strings are a trifle harsh in the opening of the slow movement and a little too strong, perhaps, throughout. But this version is far superior to the only other I know.



The *Fifth Symphony* (which Weingartner conducts) is less solid than H.M.V., but more solid than Polydor. In clarity also it stands between the two. I do not find the fast tempo of the slow movement quite convincing, but the *Finale* is superb, the best that I know. Score-readers should be warned that here (and elsewhere occasionally throughout all the Beethoven issues) the sides sometimes overlap a little.

Weingartner is to be congratulated on his *Pastoral Symphony*, a very difficult work to "bring off." I thoroughly approve of the brisk tempo in the first movement, and the second, too, seemed less long than usual. The "aviary" business at the end of this and the joke with the bassoons in the *trio* of the *Scherzo* are very successful. In this symphony again some people may prefer a medium needle—especially in the last two movements.

But for the exultant *Seventh Symphony* one must have a loud needle, even if the effect is rather shattering on account of the very full scoring. Weingartner's *Scherzo* is superb, and the slow movement also is good. The *Finale* is probably as clear as the heavy scoring permits, but the first movement strikes me as rather lacking in energy. I should have preferred Coates here.

The delightful little *Eighth Symphony* (complete on three records) is a sheer joy with a medium needle. A carping critic might perhaps complain that the bass strings are too weak and the wood-wind chords too heavy in the delicate second movement, but he would be hard put to it to find fault with the other three movements. On the whole if I was allowed only one of the Columbia symphonies I should choose this one—and its brevity makes it comparatively cheap. Once more Weingartner is the conductor.

Columbia have also recorded the *Ninth Symphony*, but to this I have already referred in the March GRAMOPHONE.

Perhaps this is the most convenient place to mention the remaining orchestral work, the *Coriolan Overture*, conducted by Mengelberg. This gloomy but highly imaginative composition is worthily played and reproduced (complete on two sides). It is less immediately attractive than many of Beethoven's works, but familiarity brings ever-increasing admiration.

#### QUARTETS.

The *Lener Quartet* gives us all the six works comprising Op. 18 except No. 5. The series of concerts at which they recently performed all Beethoven's quartets has everywhere received the encomiums of the critics, and their renderings for the gramophone are, I am convinced, no whit less good. The word "slick" in relation to their interpretations has occurred in more than one press notice, and their "slickness" is nowhere more apparent or more thoroughly in place than in these five works where the neatness of the workmanship demands a corresponding neatness in execution. I shall not discuss each quartet separately, as my remarks would maintain a monotonous note of praise with small variety, for the recording is little short of ideal. The breaks in No. 1 and No. 3 are rather a nuisance (I have already referred to this defect), and the tone in the first movement of No. 6 is a little harsh, though this may be deliberate. The *Scherzos* and *Minuets* are a sheer joy in every case, and I should like to give a special word of praise to the excellently done slow movement from No. 3 and the almost miraculous performance of the queer, contrapuntal slow movement (called *Scherzo*) in No. 4. But I shall give some idea of the general level of these records if I say that had I to choose a single quartet from the set I should select neither No. 3 or No. 4, but No. 2.

In the three *Rasoumovsky quartets* (Op. 59) the breaks are once again the only disturbing features. They bothered me least in No. 3 (though there is a bad one in the first movement), and for other reasons as well I liked this one the best; the romantic treatment of the slow movement and the very finished and intelligent rendering of the *Minuet* are particularly good. But I mustn't forget the first two movements of No. 1, which very much appealed to me, and the *Allegretto* (really a *Scherzo* and *Trio*) of No. 2, which is perhaps the best single movement in the whole series.

Op. 95, in *F minor* is a splendid work all through. A note of tragic intensity is struck in the very first bar and maintained consistently—especially in the *Scherzo* and *Finale*—right up to the miraculous conclusion. The tense concentration of this quartet does not lend itself to transparent treatment, and we must not expect to find everything set out so neatly as in the works of Op. 18. I do not think I should have selected the Lener for this work (I heard a more forcible interpretation the other day from the Buda-

pest), but I can assure the numerous gramophiles who have been eagerly awaiting this hitherto unrecorded quartet that they need have no fear of being "let down" by these records.

The first movement of Op. 127 in *E flat* is again first rate—indeed I have never appreciated it so much. The remainder of the work, good though it is, hardly maintains this level, and there is weakness in the high notes of the violin. In the slow movement and the first part of the *Finale* I definitely prefer the *Virtuoso* records (H.M.V.). But the Lener are their own brilliant selves again at the end of the *Finale*. This is the sort of thing in which they excel.

The *B flat*, Op. 130 is a quartet (in six movements!) that calls for the very highest qualities both of execution and musicianship if it is to sound convincing. In the hands of the Lener the first movement remains pithy (it must always be that) but it is far from unintelligible. The middle movements are finely done; I have never heard the *Andante* sound so straightforward, and as for the *Cavatina*, well, breathes there a gramophile with soul so dead that he will only buy one of all these Beethoven records, then this is the one I recommend for him. The *Finale*—written later, as we know—seems to me rather less interesting.

There is a slight bubble or something on my pressing of the fifth side of Op. 135 (the end of the *Leno*). But this did not spoil my enjoyment of a performance that made this difficult work seem quite clear and not even awkwardly written. These six sides make a worthy conclusion to a monumental achievement.

And now may I point out that we still have no complete version of Op. 18, No. 5, and that we are ready for a modern recording of Op. 131. Which company will attend to this? As to the *Grosse Fuge* (Op. 133) I can see little hope except through the N.G.S. Why should they not carry out a suggestion made recently, and record it with their chamber orchestra?

#### OTHER WORKS.

In the first page of the "*Archduke*" *Trio* (Op. 97) one notices that the 'cello has a rather nasal quality, and that the piano, when accompanying, is almost inaudible. This seems to show that the piano *Trio* is a less satisfactory combination than the string quartet, for recording purposes anyhow. These defects become less obvious as the work goes on, but they recur again towards the end, and therefore I like the two middle movements best. The players all do well individually, but they hardly have the perfect *ensemble* of the Lener.

The *Kreutzer* is good, perhaps the best we have. Balance and *ensemble* are alike excellent, and the players exhibit just the right amount of virtuosity and no more. I found a medium needle answered well. Several of the breaks are very abrupt.

Of the two piano *Sonatas* the *Appassionata* is the one I recommend. Murdoch's playing here is passionate yet controlled, clean and accurate, and he makes his climaxes well. The recording with its full, resonant tone (and no "blast") represents a fine attempt to deal with a difficult work (from the recorder's point of view) and a difficult instrument. In the *Pathétique* I found the first two movements quite satisfactory (the singing tone in the *Adagio* being excellent), but the third movement is made to sound rather dry—or so it seemed to me. The recording is good, but not so good as in the *Appassionata*.

Lastly there is a record of extracts from Beethoven's Sketch-Books, each little phrase being preceded by a few explanatory words from an announcer. This is exceedingly interesting. Most of us have heard of these Note-Books, but very few of us know them at first hand, and this chance of making their acquaintance should not be missed.

#### TWO BOOKS ON BEETHOVEN.

*Beethoven*, by Harvey Grace. Masters of Music series. Kegan Paul (7s. 6d.).

*Ludwig van Beethoven's Pianoforte Sonatas*, translated from the Danish of William Behrend by Ingeborg Lund. J. M. Dent and Sons (6s. 0d.).

Here are two tributes of another kind to the hero of the hour—for tributes both these books are, though they have little else in common. William Behrend's book contains a good deal of biographical matter besides a discussion of each of the 32 piano Sonatas. After reading Cortot's preface I was afraid Mr. Behrend was going to wax sentimental, and so he does, though it is only fair to say that he fully realises that some other authorities do not share his views. The more absurd stories he does not accept and when, as in the



case of the so-called *Moonlight Sonata*, he follows the romantic legend, he supports it with a fair show of evidence. Only those who are familiar with the sources can pass judgment on these matters, but I fancy that most of us will prefer to pin our faith to Thayer rather than to M. Behrend. Students of the Sonatas will find the book helpful, especially for the information it gives of the circumstances under which each work was written. Whether the rather highly-coloured accounts of the music will appeal to them depends on their turn of mind. The translation is quite intelligible, but it cannot be called good English prose.

Mr. Grace's book is divided into three parts. The first and longest is biographical, the second gives us a sketch of Beethoven's personality, and the third deals in a most enlightening manner with his music. Mr. Grace's general attitude may be gathered from the following quotation:—"To the laurels earned by the composer, tradition has added a halo for the man. No amount of critical examination can disturb the laurels by more than a stray leaf; but the halo must go." This attitude the author consistently maintains, often following Thayer (a very sound guide), and supporting his views with a well-marshalled array of evidence. He writes well and his book is eminently readable. I should like to introduce him to Mr. Behrend, with whom his opinions conflict on every point except their common appreciation of Beethoven's music. Both writers appear to the layman to know their subject, and it would be interesting to see what happened when the seconds left the ring. Personally I should back Mr. Grace; he gives an impression of weight that would tell in the end, I think.

P. L.

Please note an admirable life and criticism of BEETHOVEN by W. J. Turner (E. Benn. 18s.). I hope to say more about it next month. The achievement of such perfect lucidity in the expression of some very hard thinking deserves more than this casual acknowledgment. But there is no space this month in which to do more than take off my hat to it in passing.

C. M.



## ORCHESTRAL

Instruments used: H.M.V. new model, large table grand, No. 126, sound-box No. 4; Columbia large table grand, sound-box No. 7.

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

D.1190, 1191, 1192, 1193, 1194 (12in., 32s. 6d.). **The Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Coates: **Symphony in B minor, Op. 74, the "Pathetic"** (Tchaikovsky).

D.1210 (12in., 6s. 6d.). **Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Coates: **Overture to "Prince Igor"** (Borodin).

D.1214, 1215, 1216 (12in., 19s. 6d.). **Philadelphia Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Leopold Stokowski: **Casse Noisette Suite** (Tchaikovsky).

I seem to remember having once said something which displeased a few strong admirers of Tchaikovsky; and as I love to praise, I will begin by saying that I have an immense admiration for this composer. He was a master of his job, and a man who made the best (sometimes also the worst) of both the world of music and of his own heart. His technique—by which I mean his entire management of the incredibly difficult affair of mixing his pigments with emotion, and putting his mind on paper for other folk to play about with—was masterly. I never cease to admire his knowledge of his job, the lack of which is the thing I most despise in any so-called musician who won't work to get it. According to the light that visited his too often darkened soul, he was faithful to himself and his visions of artistic truth. To criticise him one considers that and all else appertaining to his

life; and then one finds that though his terrors (perhaps more artistic than really present in his mind—for the artist is an actor all the time) always "come off," there is too strong a vein of the second-hand-black-cloak weaker-Byronic stuff in him. Yet few musicians don't enjoy a dose of him now and again, even in his "dismals." Those who like a full measure of this will revel in the new *Pathetic*. It used to be Sir Henry who urbanely made our flesh creep, in his earlier "Russian" days. Now the still more energetic and perhaps more vital (because younger) Mr. Coates rides the storm of despair and flings the red paint of war across the picture in that third movement.

Most of this work is finely done; but I think the five-four movement a little fast and lacking in suavity, and the march *much* too fast. It is only towards the end that the thing becomes a march at all; before that it is a "double," with some unclear string parts. I much prefer Sir Henry's reading of this, and indeed, of the five-four also. After all, the march is not the frenetic Tchaikovsky of the Fourth Symphony, as this record makes it seem. The string tone in this work is still over-keen. I had thought that defect was being got over. It takes away from one's pleasure; and heartily as we rejoice in the amazing breadth and richness, and the truer and fuller tone of the wind, I hope readers will join me in begging our recording friends to get rid of the hardness and untrue tone that still comes from the strings. They are the foundation of the orchestra, and we ought never to tire of them. In this work, fine as are its best moments, I confess I found their tone often harsh and trying. (One ought not to listen to the records in a small room. It is better to go out into the hall—or even into the street. The effect from about a dozen to twenty yards' distance is often extraordinary).

The best of Mr. Coates's reading of the *Pathetic* is to be found, I think, in the first and last movements, which give us a thrill we have not previously had from any post-Beethoven music, on discs. By all means get this symphony, for you are sure to like enough of it to make the cost worth while. The first movement takes two records, and the others one each. (All the sides of the first movement, by the way, are labelled "Adagio"; but the Adagio is only the introduction, not the whole movement).

I am not sure if it is known exactly how much of the *Prince Igor* Overture was written out by Borodin; if I remember rightly it was completed, from his sketches, by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazounov, some other person's memory also coming to their aid.

The scoring bears traces of Rimsky's hand, all over. There are some tuneful bits, and the usual effective foretastes of the drama. It is not a great overture, as such, but the exciting swirl of the music makes good value, and it is sure to be liked. The playing is first rate, and the thing is capitally held in the air by Mr. Coates. An admirable item, this.

In the *Casse Noisette Suite* D.1214 contains the *Overture, March, Trepak and Sugar-Plum Fairy*, D.1215 the *Arab Dance, Chinese Dance and Reed-Pipe Dance*, and D.1216 the *Flower Waltz*. The playing is splendidly disciplined. There is in the *March* a curious effect of etiolation in the brass. This I take to be the result of the recording in a large and apparently empty hall. The speeds are a little unusual. I can't make up my mind whether the *March* is to be stepped slowly or quickly. If the latter, it is an improvement even on a Rifle regiment's pace. The tone-colour in the *Fairy* piece is uncommonly good, the celesta especially being delightful. The *Reed-Pipe Dance* is a little too fast for its quality to flow out really prettily. This orchestra, though very efficient, does not seem to "play with" the music, as, say, Goossens would cause it to do. The discipline is a little too evident. But tonally there is excellent stuff in it. I cannot think, though, that the hall does it full justice. We must find some solution of this new difficulty of recording in empty halls.

### COLUMBIA.

L.1830, 1831 (12 in., 13s. 0d.). **London Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Sir D. Godfrey: **Four Slavonic Dances** (Dvorák).

L.1961, 1962 (12 in., 13s. 0d.). **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**, conducted by Bruno Walter: **Overture to "The Flying Dutchman"** (Wagner) and (on last side) **Introduction to Act 3 of "Lohengrin"** (Wagner).

9185 (12 in., 4s. 6d.). B.B.C. Wireless Orchestra, conducted by Pitt: **Selection from "Il Trovatore"** (Verdi).

There are no more pleasant "recreations" than Dvorák's dances. Probably all pianist readers have played them in duet form (published by Lengnick), and fiddlers have touched them too. The four here given are well varied. I have only two



little doubts—whether the entire orchestra is absolutely in tune all the way, and whether the wood-wind is not on one of its half-off days. The L.S.O. sometimes disappoints, in that department, as regular concert-goers know only too well.

The interpretation is a trifle on the stiff side, at moments. The phrasing of the third dance is a little dull. Instead of making the two tiny phraselets out of the first-and-second and third-and-fourth notes in each bar, it is more dainty and lilty to phrase two-three, four-one. It would be sol-fa'd thus:—s . s : d . d | s . s : m . m | f . f : s . s | m . The underlining shows the phrasing.

With these small qualifications I hail the records as welcome additions to the library of happy music—the sort of thing that helps to smooth away the wrinkles.

As with the *Ride of the Valkyries*, only the new process can do justice to music of the elements, whether human or of nature. I do not expect to hear a better performance of the *Dutchman* music. It is just conceivable that the wood-wind *might* be more perfectly brought to the ear, but as a reasonable being I am satisfied with the present achievement. Even the drum-beats just before Senta's theme starts, on the first side, show the gain in truth, from the old days. How well pleased we were then—eeking out performance with imagination; and how much we have to be thankful for now! Walter rides the storm like a real master, holding the reins with that assured ease that makes for our best enjoyment. In the *Lohengrin* extract the strings are much more sweet and suave than in some of the other records of the month. The balance is well maintained without the least forcing of the tone, which sings out in the most joyous, buoyant way, that fills the mind with the real spirit of this optimistic music.

Pitt's operatic extracts are capitally handled. He has a real flair for this work. Tone and temper are alike happy.

#### VOCALION.

K.05288 (12in., 4s. 6d.). **Aeolian Orchestra**, conducted by S. Chapple: **Infernal Dance** and **Finale** from "The Fire Bird" (Stravinsky).

I hope nobody will pass this Stravinsky by, remembering too well that the man once *was* a genius, and is so no longer. This music comes from his days of inspiration, when his bewitching glimpses of drollery and fantasy were shot through with beauty. What a descent from this *Firebird* and *Petroushka* to his *Symphony of Wind Instruments*, his *Rite of Spring* and half-hearted scurries back to the classics! The orchestra makes a good thing of the *Infernal Dance* and the triumphal *Finale*. I hope we shall have the rest of the Suite newly recorded.

#### EDISON BELL (VELVET FACE).

702 (12 in., 4s. 0d.). **Royal Symphony Orchestra**, conducted by Eugene Goossens, senr.: **Overture, The Roman Carnival** (Berlioz).

The cor anglais solo comes out well—rather more "plummy" than in life, but with a good deal of the natural melancholy preserved. The curves of the melody are well drawn, and the colours are brightly laid on. I prefer a finer *ppp* in the early part of the *Allegro*, but the balance between strings and wind is good. The *fortissimo* is a trifle hard-toned, but altogether this record has the breadth and boldness required. There is a small cut, near the end, but there is quite sufficient of the music to make the performance worth having.

#### BRUNSWICK.

50088 (12in., 8s.). **Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra** conducted by Verbrugghen: **Overture to "Der Freischütz"** (Weber).

3357 (10in., 3s.). **Vessella's Italian Band**: **Overture to "Stradella"** (Flotow).

What I may call the ripple of the muscles in this American performance of the Weber overture bespeaks a well exercised body. There is ease of control here; Mr. Verbrugghen (once well-known to us as conductor of the Scottish Orchestra) realises how freely he can trust the players to keep within the rhythmic scheme and yet to make the music sound extremely free-rhythmed. I think our British players of the wood-wind could give mellow tone. This American tone, as recorded, seems a little too brightly burnished and metallic. That may be the fault of the recording process, of course. I find the strings less edgy than in most of our new recordings, but the bass a trifle weak. It is a capable and inspiring performance of a fine work.

The Italian band has a rich and rather gaudy tone, and raises a goodly body of sound in a fortissimo. Indeed, for this kind of rumbustious, rather bumptious music, it is exactly the right combination.

#### POLYDOR.

69854 (12in., 5s. 9d.). **State Opera Orchestra, Berlin**, conducted by Strauss: "Rose Cavalier" **Waltz** (Strauss).

66396, 66397 (12in., 11s. 6d.). **State Opera Orchestra, Berlin**, conducted by Leo Blech: **Second Suite** from "Peer Gynt" (Grieg).

It is pleasant to have the composer's own performance of that glorious waltz, the revivification and rejuvenation of the Strauss of an older day—and to feel how exactly his interpretation is just what one would like to get from an orchestra if one had the stick in hand. This is extremely clean yet luscious playing, well recorded—perhaps a trifle less brilliantly than if it were done by one of our own companies, but in perfect taste.

The second *Peer Gynt* suite is much less frequently heard than the first. The first of these records contains *Ingrid's Complaint* (*Lament*) and the *Arabian Dance*; the second, *Peer Gynt's Return* and *Solveig's Song*. There are some very tuneful and happy bits of Grieg here. The whole of his music to Ibsen's play is wonderfully well fitted to its subject. (Any who may be minded to re-read this fine and entertaining work, and who may not have a copy at hand, may care to be reminded that the *Everyman* Library publishes Farquharson Sharp's translation at 2s. 0d.). The *Return* gives a sketch only of the storm that wrecked Peer when at last he was coming home. It is not much more than a teacup storm, but it is sufficient to suggest the scene, and its slight theatricality seems to me to fit Peer's character nicely. I like the recording—alert and neat, without any excess of emotion in the first and last pieces. The final scene in the drama, when Peer finds rest in the arms of faithful Solveig, is touchingly simple, and Grieg felt deeply enough to give us music that has in it the blend of sadness and sweetness that we feel in the poem.

#### PARLOPHONE.

10543, 10544 (12in., 9s. 0d.). **Opera House Orchestra**, conducted by Siegfried Wagner: **Good Friday Music** from "Parsifal" (Wagner). On fourth side, Quintet from "The Mastersingers" (reviewed under "Operatic Records.")

10545, 10546 (12in., 9s. 0d.). **Opera House Orchestra**, conducted by George Széll. **Leonora Overture No. 3** (Beethoven).

Parlophone is holding the fort admirably in these new days. I do not think Wagner's son a specially gifted conductor, and believe some of our own men, or others of his own country, could draw a richer emotional life from this great music. The tone is delightfully firm and round, and the wind passages have at moments a bloom upon them that is not too frequently kept in recording their more delicate tones. The whole performance gives me much pleasure.

The best qualities in the *Leonora Overture* records are the meticulous care, the real *pp* (not too common a thing), and the interplay of the parts. The wood-wind is a shade pale, the strings a trifle light. It is a restrained musicianly performance, of a kind that is fundamentally sound, if perhaps less exciting than some we are getting nowadays. The *Presto* has its thrill, though.

K. K.

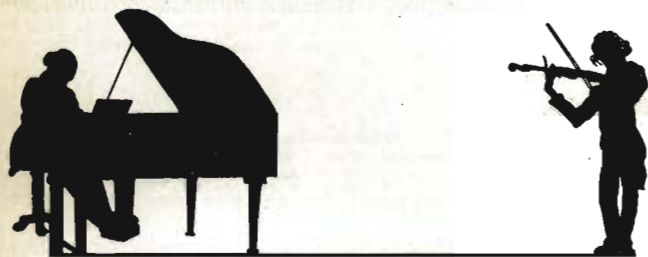


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## INSTRUMENTAL

### ORGAN.

The most considerable organ work I have met in this month's list is Rheinberger's *Concerto Op. 177*, played by **Walter Fischer** on Polydor 66445-7 (three 12in. records, 17s. 3d.). The music is typical Rheinberger and is well recorded apart from some rather insistent high frequencies. I particularly liked the performance of the slow movement which shows how successful Rheinberger could be in dealing with a difficult combination of instruments. **Walter Fischer** has made another record (Polydor 95016, 12in., 5s. 9d.) which contains Bach's *Toccata and Fugue in D minor* (Peters edition, iv., p. 27). His rendering, the first complete one of this work, I think, is massive and well thought out, and the recording is quite successful but for a little weakness in the bass. Yet another record, *Improvisation for Church Festivals and Improvisation on a Special Theme* (Polydor 95008, 12in., 5s. 9d.) is rather disappointing. An improvisation is by definition something done on the impulse of the moment, and **Walter Fischer** is not among the very few whose impulses are worth preserving. He has, too, a stop on his organ which sounds very piercing on my machine. Parlophone deserve a good mark for E.10551 (12in., 4s. 6d.), wherein **Edward d'Evry** gives us some beautiful soft playing in a Bach *Choral Prelude, "Blessed Jesus"* (this turns out to be *Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier*, Peters v., p. 105). On the back he plays a Bach *Fugue in G* (Peters ix., p. 18); here I respect him for avoiding fussy changes of registration, but I wish he had used less 4 ft. tone throughout, as this rather confuses the listener. For this record a medium needle gives the best result, and the same remark applies to Parlophone E.10550 (12in., 4s. 6d.), *Album Leaf and Meditation*, two quite pleasant though unambitious compositions by the same organist, **Edward d'Evry**. He plays, by the way, on the Brompton Oratory Organ. For H.M.V. **Dr. Henry Ley**, playing on the Kingsway Hall Organ, has made a good record of Purcell's *Trumpet Tunes and Ayre* (C.1314, 12in., 4s. 6d.), in which readers need not fear that the trumpet goes on all the time, and *Concerto in G minor* (Handel). The Handel, presumably a fragment from a *Concerto*, is less interesting than the Purcell, which is excellent. **R. Goss-Custard** (H.M.V., C.1316, 12in., 4s. 6d.) has got some nice orchestral effects out of Hollins' *Spring Song*, and secures a very rhythmic and well-balanced rendering of Dubois' *Grand Choeur*. **G. T. Pattmann**, who plays on the organ of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St. John's Wood, has a fine instrument and is most excellently recorded, but these advantages are heavily discounted by the exaggerated sentiment and distorted rhythms in his performance of Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C sharp minor* (yet again!) and Dvorák's *Humoreske* (Columbia 9181, 12in., 4s. 6d.). He creates a rather better impression, however, in Columbia 4231 (10in., 3s.)—Elgar's *Salut d'Amour* and Saint-Saëns' *Le Cygne*. Bach's name has disappeared from the label of Zonophone 2880 (10in., 2s. 6d.). It should be coupled with Gounod's under the *Ave Maria*. But I dare say Bach won't mind, for though the recording is all right, **R. Arnold Greir**'s performance does not come out very clearly. No list of organ records is complete, it seems, without Lemare's *Andantino*, and Greir gives us quite an adequate rendering of this piece of sentimentality on the back of his disc. On a Winner record (4587, 10in., 2s. 6d.) **Spencer Shaw** has a loud and rather short, but otherwise quite good and well-recorded, version of the *Hallelujah Chorus* (Handel), which he couples with his own composition *The Tempest*, this last being just what one would expect. He is equally stormy in Sibelius' *Finlandia* (Zonophone A316, 12in., 4s.), but here he has better musical material. On the other side of this disc is the (Grand) *March* from Wagner's *Tannhäuser*; it doesn't make a good organ record, but for this we can hardly blame the reproduction. Wagner, after all, was thinking as little of the organ as of the gramophone.

### PIANO.

The great merit of **Edward Isaacs**, who has done three records for the Regal Company, is that he seems only to value his considerable powers of execution as a means for conveying a composer's thought. Consequently his *Liebestraum* (Liszt), which occupies both sides of G.8789 (10in., 2s. 6d.), is really a love dream and not the nightmare so many pianists make of it. G.1042 (12in., 4s.) contains four pieces, *Waltz in D flat, Op. 64, No. 1* (Chopin), *Waltz in D flat, Op. 70, No. 4* (Chopin), *Moment Musical, F minor* (Schubert), and *Humoreske* (Tchaikovsky). Here he is best in Schubert and Tchaikovsky; the Chopin pieces are perhaps a little lacking in subtlety. His finest performance, however, is of Handel's *Fantasia in C major* (G.8776), where the playing is splendidly rhythmic and alive, and the same composer's *Harmonious Blacksmith* on the back is only less good than the *Fantasia*. **Harold Samuel** (H.M.V. D.1196, 12in., 6s. 6d.) has recorded the *Preludes and Fugues in C major and C minor* from the first book of "the forty-eight" (Bach). This is magnificent music, magnificent playing, and magnificent recording—every note clear, and the bass just balancing the treble. Samuel's fine treatment of the C minor Prelude is a good example of what liberties a pianist with rhythm can take if he has the root of the matter in him and knows what he is doing. A strong though flexible rhythm is again the secret of **William Murdoch's Etude in A flat, Op. 25, No. 1 (Chopin) well recorded on Columbia D.1567 (10in., 4s. 6d.); and it is a rhythmic defect that makes his *Waltz in F major, Op. 34* (Chopin) sound rather jerky, though some of this jerkiness may also be connected with the reproduction, which is not so good as in the *Etude*. For Beltona **Leslie J. Protheroe** plays with a good deal of *rubato* a lamentably sentimental banality of his own, entitled *Garden of Memories*, which he couples with an *Allegro* (also of his own) that amounts to exactly nothing. The number of this record is 1167 (10in., 2s. 6d.). The Beltona recording room is worthy of better stuff than this. An *Air in C major* by Purcell and a *Couranto and Minuet* (both in D major) by Maurice Greene (1695-1755) on Columbia 4217 (10in., 3s.) will interest others besides students. Greene's music has something of Handel's spaciousness, though it lacks his rhythmic and contrapuntal strength. The player is **A. H. Henderson**, whose name I do not remember seeing before on Columbia labels, and I congratulate him on an enterprising and successful record.**

### VIOLIN.

**Peggy Cochrane's** violin sounds as delightful as ever on Aco G.16157 (10in., 2s. 6d.), but I do not find that *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* makes a good violin solo, and *By the Waters of Minnehaha* (Thurlo w Lieurance) does not amount to much. From **Mishel Piastro** (Brunswick 10269, 10in., 3s.) we get good execution and good intonation, but his tone is a little harsh (this may be the recording), and his interpretation of the *Hymn to the Sun* (Rimsky-Korsakov) is rather "floppy"; he does better on the other side in the *Drigo-Auer Heart of Harlequin—Serenade*. The playing and recording of **Joseph Szigeti** (Columbia L.1963, 12in., 6s. 6d.) are quite first-rate, nor do I expect soon to hear a more convincing rendering of the *Slavonic Dance in E minor* (Dvorák-Kreisler). This is backed by *Le Printemps*, wherein the very modern **Darius Milhaud**, shows how simple and melodious he can be. **Albert Sammons** (Columbia D.1565, 10in., 4s. 6d.) does all that can be done with a *Passacaglia* by Nachez "on a theme with figured bass by Sammartini," but it is not very interesting music. Sir Hamilton Harty leaves no doubt that his *Irish Fantasia*, played by **Edith Kelly-Lange**, on H.M.V. B.2419 (10in., 3s.) really is Irish. Every bar of the violin part is completely Hibernian. The work is neatly put together and very adequately played and recorded. The outstanding quality of a record by **Edith Lorand** (Parlophone, E.10549, 12in., 4s. 6d.) is, as so often with her, charm. But *The Old Tower of St. Stephen* (Brandl-Kreisler) is rather dull stuff, though I can recommend the pieces on the other side, Beethoven's *Minuet in G* (if everybody is not tired of this) and *Schön Rosmarin* (Kreisler). On another record of **Edith Lorand's** (Parlophone E.10537) we find, somewhat naturally, that her *Liebesfreud* (Kreisler) at 4s. 6d., is not quite up to Kreisler's own version for H.M.V. at 8s. 6d. The playing is less subtle, for one thing. It is, however, well recorded and good value at the price. *Liebeslied* (Kreisler) on the back was lacking from my advance pressing. **Michael Zacharewitsch** (Velvet-Face, 1200, 10in., 2s. 6d.) produces a tone that sounds beautiful in soft passages, but is a little hard (on the gramophone) in loud ones. Perhaps a fibre needle would help here. He plays the *Minuet in G* from Bach's *Anna Magdalena Book* delightfully, and if I found Fauré's *Berceuse* less interesting, that was not the fault



of Zacharewitsch. **Albert Sandler** is an excellent fiddler and seldom fails to get the effect he wants, but I still think it a pity that he and the admirable Vocalion recording are wasted on such things as **Midnight Bells** (Heuberger-Kreisler) and Monti's **Czardas** (Vocalion X.9965, 10in., 3s.). There is a springiness in the rhythm and a subtlety in the phrasing of those two fine violinists, **Adila Fachiri** and **Jelly d'Aranyi** (Vocalion K.05292, 12in., 4s. 6d.), that make **Cueca** (Norman Fraser) very attractive, and the same magic brings a not very inspired **Adagio** of Spohr's (from *Duet in D minor for two violins*) marvellously to life. This is a record well worth considering.

## CELLO.

In a record by **W. H. Squire** (Columbia D.1565, 10in., 4s. 6d.) the tone is a little strident, though a fibre needle improves matters. The pieces are **I will walk with my Love** (Herbert Hughes) and **Nobody knows de trouble I've seen** (Negro Spiritual). The recording is quite good, but not up to the very highest Columbia standard which we get in 4258 (10in., 3s.), **Sonata in G major—Vivace** (Sammartini, arr. A. Moffat) and **Allegretto** (Boccherini-Kreisler), delicately played by **Antoni Sala**, who faithfully recreates the daintiness (I almost wrote "the coyness") of the **Allegretto** and the lively dance-measure of the **Vivace**. **Beatrice Harrison's** very artistic playing appears to great advantage in the pleasant **Air in B** and the lovely folk-song tune **Lament of Fanaid Grove**, but her impetuous treatment of the **Blackbird Reel** is just a trifle coarse on my gramophone, though the defect is quite insufficient to detract appreciably from a first-rate record. These pieces, all of which are arranged by A. Hughes, appear on H.M.V. D.1195 (12in., 6s. 6d.). **Cedric Sharpe** (H.M.V. B.2413, 10in., 3s.) plays delightfully Kreisler's arrangement of **Chanson Louis XIII.** (Couperin), and he obviously appreciates it. His playing of **Pavane** (Couperin arr. Kreisler) I also liked, but not even Cedric Sharpe can make his own arrangement of **Harlequin and Columbine** (Woodworth) sound enterprising.

P. L.



## OPERATIC

**ZENATELLO** (tenor) and **NOTO** (baritone).—Duet, **Mio signore** (No, my lord) and **Ora e per sempre** (Addio) from **Otello** (Verdi), recorded from Covent Garden during actual performance, June 17, 1926. In Italian. Conducted by Vincenzo Bellezza. H.M.V., D.B.953 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

**MAARTJE OFFERS** (contralto).—**Printemps qui commence** from **Samson et Dalila** (Saint-Saëns) and **Connais-tu le pays?** from **Mignon** (Thomas). In French. H.M.V., D.B.913 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

**CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA OF THE STATE OPERA, BERLIN**, conducted by Leo Blech.—**Da zu dir der Heiland kam** and **Wach auf' es nahet gen den Tag** from **Die Meistersinger** (Wagner). In German. H.M.V., D.1211 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**ROSINA TORRI** (soprano).—**Tu che di gel sei cinta**, Act 3, and **Signore, ascolta!** Act 1, from **Turandot** (Puccini). In Italian. H.M.V. B.2409 (10in., 3s.).

**ELISA STÜNZER** (soprano).—**Ah, lo so** from **Il Flauto Magico** (Mozart) and **Euch Lüften, die mein Klagen**, Elsa's Air from **Lohengrin** (Wagner). In German. Polydor 95015 (12in., 5s. 9d.).

**HERBERT SIMMONDS** (baritone).—**Prologue** from **Pagliacci** (Leoncavallo). In English. Regal G.8779 (10in., 2s. 6d.).

**LA SCALA CHORUS**, conducted by **CAV. CARLO SABAGNO**.—**Gli aranci olezzano** from **Cavalleria Rusticana** (Mascagni) and **Coro delle compare** from **Pagliacci** (Leoncavallo). In Italian. H.M.V. C.1317 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**LAURITZ MELCHIOR** (tenor).—**O Paradiso** from **L'Africaine** (Meyerbeer) and **Als ich erwachte**, Act III, Sc. 3, from **Tannhäuser** (Wagner). In German. Polydor 66439 (12in., 5s. 9d.).

**CARL MARTIN OEHMANN** (tenor): **Prize Song** and **Am stillen Herd** from **Die Meistersinger** (Wagner). In German. Parlophone E.10552 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

**SIGRID ONEGIN** (contralto): **Mon cœur s'ouvre à ta voix** from **Samson et Dalila** (Saint-Saëns), and **Chanson Bohême** from **Carmen** (Bizet). In French with orchestra. Brunswick 50077B. (12in.).

**EVA TURNER** (soprano): **Vissi d'arte** from **La Tosca** (Puccini) and **Voi lo sapete** from **Cavalleria Rusticana** (Mascagni). In Italian. Columbia L.1836 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

**APPLETON MOORE** (baritone): **So, Sir page**, from **Figaro** (Mozart), and (a) **Serenade**, (b) **Drinking Song** from **Don Giovanni** (Mozart). In English. V.F. 703 (12in., 4s.).

**BETTENDORF** (Eva), **BOHNEN** (Sachs), **OEHMANN** (Walther), **GOMBERT** (David) and **LÜDERS** (Magdalena).—**Quintet** from Act III of **Die Meistersinger** (Wagner). In German. Parlophone E.10544 (12in., 4s. 6d.). (See under **Orchestral Reviews**: **Good Friday Music** from **Parsifal**).

**JAN KIEPURA** (tenor): **Recondita armonia** and **E lucevan le stelle** from **La Tosca** (Puccini). In Italian. Parlophone R.20008 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

*Zenatello and Noto.*—To those who, like myself, happened to be present at Covent Garden on June 17th last year, when Verdi's *Otello* was given, it will be peculiarly interesting to hear a portion of it over again, thanks to the unsuspected presence of a microphone and the necessary connection with an electric recording machine at Hayes, Middlesex. Wonderful are the ways in which things like this can be done. What an agreeable surprise, too, to hear the best part of the fine duet between Otello and Iago, which Messrs. Zenatello and Noto sang to such admiration, presented once more by the same two artists for our own especial benefit, as it were. It seems to me that this record brings with it every imaginable quality of the drama which is being enacted—the atmosphere, the text, the music, the splendid singing of the two men, the orchestral effects—everything, in short, that the ear could possibly take in. Zenatello's voice is in particularly first-rate order, his declamation imposing, his sense of climax and colour unerring. Bar the B flat, which Tamagno dwelt on with such ringing power, this might be the original Otello over again.

*Maartje Offers.*—The air from *Samson* is the better of the two. *Connais-tu le pays?* is taken as if the sole idea were to get it over and done with—audible gasps for breath and hurried, spasmodic phrasing. One asks, why such excitement over a request for a little geographical information? And one adds, what a lovely quality of voice, if only it did not tremble ceaselessly!

*Berlin Opera Chorus and Orchestra.*—Often have I felt sorry when the overture to *Die Meistersinger* broke off at a "full close," instead of merging into the glorious chorale which is sung on the rising of the curtain by the congregation in the *Katrinienkirche* at Nuremberg. Well, here we have it now in sonorous volume, performed by the executive forces of the Berlin State Opera-house at the Singakademie under Dr. Blech. The whole effect is very satisfying, the quality of the voices being especially good; and the orchestral bit at the end, where the burghers emerge from the interior of the church, is admirably played. Equally fine, in every sense, is the rendering of the choral hymn for St. John's Day sung by the crowd in the final scene on the banks of the Pegnitz.

*Rosina Torri in Turandot.*—The part of the slave, Liù, in Puccini's posthumous opera may not be nearly so prominent as that of the wicked heroine herself, but for all that it takes a first-class singer to do it justice. Maria Zamboni was the original, but, judging from this record, Rosina Torri must be extremely good, too, and I commend her effort to all who are endeavouring, with the aid of the H.M.V., to make acquaintance with this elaborate work before Signor Forzano mounts it at the Royal Opera. Of the two airs—if they may be so designated—sung by Liù, the one in the third act is the more interesting. It recalls most distinctly the touching dramatic passage in *A flat minor*, "That your mother should take you," sung by Madame Butterfly in the second act. It also sounds intensely dramatic here, and the clear, bright soprano of the singer rings true in every note of it. One could hardly wish to hear these pieces better sung or the result more accurately recorded.



*Elisa Stünzer.*—These are both records that "scratch" loudly enough to offend the ear; and, to be quite candid, the singer is not one who can afford to put up with mechanical deficiencies of that kind. Her voice is by no means remarkable, her style dull and lachrymose, her tendency to "scoop." If you can distinguish any words, you will find that she is singing *Ah, lo so* in German, not Italian. On the whole, she is to be preferred in the excerpt from *Lohengrin*, which lies more comfortably within her range.

*Herbert Simmonds.*—Cheap editions of good musical literature are always acceptable. Why not cheap records of popular operatic pieces?—the *Pagliacci Prologue*, for instance. The present example is sung with good, honest, pleasing tone, plain enunciation, and freedom from exaggeration of any sort. Being in two parts, there is no need for hurry. Only now and then the vowels are not so correct and well defined as they ought to be. The gentleman before the curtain wants to deny that the actor "has no heart to feel," and makes it sound as if he said "has no hat to fill." Evidently he can't go round with one to make his collection.

*La Scala Chorus.*—The first thing that strikes the listener on hearing this record is the immensity of the volume of tone. It is simply tremendous. The next is the extraordinary clearness of the separate voices as they pursue their parallel harmonic lines. More often than not this *Pagliacci* "bell" chorus sounds on the stage a muddled and confused outpouring of vocal noise. Here it is the very opposite. The musical quality of the voices is preserved throughout just as surely as the rhythm of the *canzone popolare*, the ding-dong of the bell, and the rich colour of the orchestration. In short, it is another addition to the mechanical wonders that the new electrical recording is daily adding to the gramophile's store.

*Lauritz Melchior.*—The tenor who can sing Meyerbeer well is not essentially the one to shine as a Wagnerian artist, and *vice versa*. If the fact were not notorious there would be ample evidence of it in the records that fill each side of this disc. There is a whole world of difference between the merit of Melchior's singing of the *Africaine* air, its constrained manner, its lack of elegance and breadth, compared with his easy—I had almost said breezy—declamation in Tannhäuser's narration of his pilgrimage to Rome. The latter reveals the German tenor at home and at his best; as Vasco de Gama on a voyage of discovery he sounds quite out of his element, and southern passion plays no part therein. Otherwise the singing is artistic and the orchestration neatly brought out.

*Carl Martin Oehmann.*—Here is another German robust tenor, but of a very different stamp. The voice is of vast dimensions, open and somewhat crude in quality, lacking in refinement and reticence, always well on the note and supported by rare breathing capacity, yet without poetry or tenderness of expression in the rendering of Walther's familiar show pieces. Obviously the artist knows his music thoroughly (he gives you more of *Am stillen Herd* than has ever been heard on a gramophone before), and delivers it with amazing freedom from effort, considering the amount of tone he brings out. Still, the quantity is more striking than the quality.

*Sigrid Onegin.*—This industrious artist continues to add constantly to her repertory, and all that she does is pretty nearly on the same level of excellence. Her voice, a mezzo-contralto of superb quality and power, is so easily produced that every kind of music from Opera to Lieder seems to lie comfortably within her reach. Her steadiness and breath-control are well exemplified in the air from *Samson et Dalila*, and the French text, both in this and the *Chanson bohème* from *Carmen*, serves as an aid to telling nasal resonance even when the words themselves are slightly indistinct. The top B flat ending to *Mon cœur s'ouvre* is neatly done, and the semiquaver turns in the *Carmen* are clear, whilst given with extraordinary *verve*.

*Eva Turner.*—The *Vissi d'arte* is sung very slowly, with much slurring of descending intervals, and therefore drags a good deal. In *Voi lo sapete* there is more freedom and abandon, consequently a livelier suggestion of misery, if I may so put it. The voice is strong, dramatic, and well-managed, the intonation correct, while the recording leaves nothing to be desired.

*Appleton Moore.*—Three Mozart airs on a single disc, and all three sung in a jolly animated sort of way which seems to fit them well enough. The style reminds me somewhat of the good

old days of ballad opera; the pronunciation of the English words certainly does; and a tremulous, breathless energy adds to the general boisterousness of the whole thing. The record will please many.

*Bettendorf, Bohnen, Oehmann, Gombert, and Lüders.*—The quintet in the third act of *Die Meistersinger* is one of the musical wonders of the world, and it is also one of the most exacting *ensemble* pieces to perform. Even the finest artists cannot succeed in revealing its true loveliness and exquisite harmonic progressions save by dint of a perfect dynamic balance, in addition to every other recognized quality of vocal excellence. This combination is pretty hard to attain, and the five singers above named have only partially achieved their aim. When the voices unite they are too loud, too "thick," and their course is difficult to follow with precision. They are in tune, but the effect is noisy and rough, especially towards the end, thus marring the beauty of the wonderful climax. Altogether I would have expected a finer result from such artists.

*Jan Kiepura.*—"Save me from my friends," might well be the present motto of the young Polish tenor who made his London début at a B.B.C. concert at the Albert Hall last month. Happily I am not called upon to criticize here what he did on that occasion. Enough that I did hear him then (through my excellent loud-speaker) in the same two passages from *Tosca* that he has also recorded, and the results are singularly identical. Jan Kiepura possesses a magnificent organ, as yet only partially trained, but fraught with the greatest possibilities. If he will quit public life for a couple of years and devote himself seriously to hard study, he may even justify in the long run his alleged resemblance to a certain deceased tenor. So far, as these records show, he is only a creature of infinite promise.

HERMAN KLEIN.



## Jan Kiepura

Kiepura is to make his next appearance at the Albert Hall next Sunday, April 3rd, to face the enthusiasts—and the critics—again. Another Pole, unheralded by gramophone records but with a great reputation, the pianist Harowitz, will play there on the following Sunday; on the 24th Johann Strauss (the younger—or is he the youngest?) will conduct a special orchestra in Strauss waltzes; and Tom Burke will probably make his reappearance there on May 1st. This month will see the two last of this season's London Symphony Orchestra Concerts at the Queen's Hall, on the 11th and 25th, with Beecham conducting. The threat to the Hall and Symphony Orchestra will not be necessary in order to attract the world to hear these two concerts.

## Odeon and Fonotipia Records

The first Kiepura record issued by Parlophone also marks the opening of the Odeon and Fonotipia catalogues to Parlophone enthusiasts. This is extremely good news for those of our readers who, judging by their correspondence, have a sharp eye for the many excellent records hitherto denied to us except after great importing difficulties.

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## SONGS

## COLUMBIA.

Muriel Brunskill (contralto) with orchestra. *Sea Pictures* (Elgar): *Sea Slumber-Song, In Haven, and Sabbath Morning at Sea, Part I; Sabbath Morning at Sea, Part II., and Where Corals lie; The Swimmer* (in two Parts). 9170-2 (three 12in., 4s. 6d. each).

*On the Banks of Allan Water* (Old Scottish Ballad) and, with orchestra, *Sink, red Sun* (Coleridge and del Riego). 4259 (10in., 3s.).

Dennis Noble (baritone): *Muleteer of Malaga (Spanish Song)* (Barron and Trotère) and *Spirit Flower* (Stanton and Tipton). 4260 (10in., 3s.).

Hubert Eisdell (tenor): *My Bird of April days* (Coleridge and Besley) and *Daphne* (Goodall and Coningsby-Clarke). D1566 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

Harold Williams (baritone) with orchestra: *Hoein'* (Lockton and Richards) and *Leanin'* (H. E. Wright and T. C. Sterndale-Bennett). 4261 (10in., 3s.).

The *Sea Pictures* Cycle, delightful as it all is, contains some of the most individual and attractive music Elgar has written (for instance, the first and fourth numbers), and this recording is one of the best things Columbia has done. Muriel Brunskill's voice sounds beautifully sympathetic here, and is backed up by almost all one could desire in sensitive interpretation.

Detailed criticism of each number cannot be made now, and there are few general criticisms. The chief is that the words are hardly ever really distinct. The five poems are from five distinct poets, some probably not available apart from the music; but even if you can't read music it is well worth while adding a few shillings on to the cost of the records and buying the vocal score. Almost the only other general weakness (and that but a slight one) is in some of the higher notes. At the lower extremity Muriel Brunskill's voice is strong and resonant, but she seems as if she is just a little afraid of some higher notes which are really well within her voice. Lastly, the orchestra is here on such equality with the singer that it is really as absurd not to name the Conductor as it would be on a Wagner record; the more so, since the orchestral part is so good as to seem almost impeccable to anyone who has not studied the full score.

Muriel Brunskill gives one of the best—probably the best—record yet of *On the Banks of Allan Water*, but still more could be made of it. She gets the last ounce out of the popular *del Riego* song.

Dennis Noble, who has lately been so prominent with the B.N.O.C., makes what is, I think, his second appearance for Columbia this month. His songs are such that one can only say: so far, so good.

Eisdell's two songs are of the fashionable drawing-room type, and I cannot imagine better singing of them.

Harold Williams would now be a yokel; but one feels sceptical of the real existence of any farm-hand quite like this.

## EDISON BELL (VELVET FACE).

Edward Halland (bass), with orchestra: *The Trumpet shall sound* (with Trumpet obbligato by Charles Leggett), and *Why do the Nations?* (both from Handel's *Messiah*). 701 (12in., 4s.).

*The Trumpet shall sound* can never have had such recording as this before. The trumpet tone rings out with full pomp and brilliance. The only grouse is against the pet habit of trumpeters—a perpetual limp. What trumpeter is there who does not do it? We should all protest to our dying days against Handel's sublimely simple phrases being made to go with the *rubato* gait of a school-girl's Chopin. Halland has a fine ringing voice of good power, which comes out with full effect in the trumpet aria. Physically he is well equal to *Why do the Nations?* but he makes heavy going of the runs—not in tempo so much as in vocal method; he makes each of them a rapid succession of attacks on every note.

## REGAL.

Kenneth Walters (baritone) with orchestra: *When the Sergeant-Major's on Parade* (Longstaffe) and *The Company Sergeant-Major* (Lyon and Sanderson). G.1041 (12in., 4s.).

One would hardly expect to find any improvement at this hour on the many existing records of these two Sergeant-Major songs. But Walters is really first-rate. Such musical value as is possible is all there (and the orchestra is worth noticing) and, best of all, Walters has a better word of command than I have ever before heard from a singer.

## VOCALION.

Malcolm McEachern (bass), with orchestra: *My old Shako* (Trotère) and *The Deathless Army* (Trotère). K.05286 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

We are told by Vocalion that these two "old favourite Soldier Songs" are recorded by special request of McEachern's "many Australian admirers." The only comment called for is that neither these admirers nor, indeed, anyone who admires not only McEachern's voice but also these two songs, will be disappointed. One wonders if this record would be still more popular if Mr. McEachern were given his new name of Jetsam on the labels?

## POLYDOR.

Arthur Descamps (tenor), in French, with orchestra: *Paysage* (Reynaldo Hahn) and *A l'Etoile du Mineur* (Henry Weyts). F.2121 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

It is interesting to find Polydor varying their choice of songs and singer (apart from Opera) from their usual German *Lied*. It is hard, therefore, not to be able to recommend this record. But it is unfortunately a painful object lesson in the result you may expect when you turn the average operatic tenor (however good in his proper sphere) on to a simple, sensitive little song. Hahn is translated into poor Massenet. I don't know, and can't trace, Weyts, but this song of his is not important.

## HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

Evelyn Scotney (soprano): *O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad, and Caller Herrin'* (both traditional). E.450 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

Dusolina Giannini (soprano), in Spanish, with orchestra: *Cielito Lindo* (Mexican Folk-Song, arr. Bourdon) and *Carmela* (Spanish-Californian Folk-Song, Hague and Ross). DA.839 (10in., 6s.).

Robert Radford (bass) with orchestra: *Rolling in foaming billows* (from Haydn's *The Creation*) and *Why do the Nations?* (from Handel's *Messiah*). D.1213 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Peter Dawson (bass-baritone): *The Lute Player* (Allitsen), and *The Floral Dance* (Katie Moss). C.1313 (12in., 4s. 6d.).

Marcel Journet (bass) with orchestra: *Les Rameaux (The Palms, Faure)* and *O Salutaris Hostia* (Luce). DB.923 (12in., 8s. 6d.).

Florence Austral (soprano) with orchestra: *O Divine Redeemer* and *There is a Green Hill* (Gounod). D.1212 (12in., 6s. 6d.).

Have Scottish songs ever sounded more wonderful than this? Evelyn Scotney is a fine singer with a lovely voice, and sings as though she were originally a Highlander. Her brogue (or whatever they call it up there) is so perfect that half her words are quite unintelligible to a mere Englishman—on first hearing, please note: her diction is really obviously impeccable. *Caller Herrin'*, by the way, is not traditional, though good enough to be, but is by some known composer I can't at the moment remember.

*Cielito Lindo* is a lilting, alluring folk-song of the Spanish type. In it Giannini is brilliant. She is equally good in *Carmela*, which however seems to me a commonplace imitation, in spite of its being called a folk-song, and one's suspicions gain support from the fact that the label does not call Hague and Ross "arrangers."

Just in time to be included comes another record of *Why do the Nations?*—and this one by Radford. It is certainly the better of the two, in spite of occasional "averaging" in Radford's runs; but the Edison Bell and H.M.V. records have different arias on their reverse sides, and this can well decide the individual purchaser's choice. *Rolling in foaming billows* is very finely done, though some of the more delicate orchestral effects are rather overweighted—still, never quite drowned—and in spite of a small and not very damaging cut.



Most gramophonists must know how effective *Peter Dawson* is in straightforward, not too subtle, British songs (not always, indeed, British song at its best). I find him completely satisfying as far as these two songs go.

The *Journet* and *Austral* records come only just in time for a few words to be said of them. The Faure and Luce songs are bad music, but the Faure at least (N.B. Faure, not Fauré) seems very popular. Admirers of either song or of *Journet* will want this record

The Gounod songs could hardly be sung more beautifully, and it is a treat to hear such a singer as Florence Austral singing with restraint.

C. M. C.



## CHORAL

### PARLOPHONE.

The Irmeler Choir, with orchestra: *Ave verum* (Mozart) and *Chorale, O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden* (Bach). 10553 (12in., 4s. 6d.)

### POLYDOR.

The Basilica Choir: *Ave verum* (Mozart) and *Transeamus* (Gloria in Excelsis Deo). 66436 (12in., 5s. 9d.)

### BRUNSWICK.

The Toronto Mendelssohn Choir (mixed voices), conducted by Dr. H. A. Fricker: *Adoramus Te* and *Exultate Deo* (Palestrina). 3248 (10in., 3s.).

### REGAL.

The Cloister Choir (with organ): *Selection of Hymns*. G.1040 (12in., 4s.).

### EDISON BELL. (Winner).

Full Choir, Grand Organ, and the Band of H. M. Scots Guards, recorded at Whitefield's Tabernacle, London: *Hymns—Onward, Christian Soldiers* (Sullivan) and *Abide with me* (W. H. Monk). 4582 (10in., 2s. 6d.)

### COLUMBIA.

The Don Cossacks Choir, conducted by Serge Jaroff: *We praise Thee, O Lord* (Tchaikovsky) and *Platoff's Song* (Old Cossack Song), both in Russian. 9186 (12in., 4s. 6d.)

The B.B.C. Choir, conducted by Stanford Robinson in Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road (at the organ, W. G. Webber): *O worship the King* (Grant) and *O day of rest and gladness* (S. S. Wesley). 4262 (10in., 3s.)

### VOCALION.

Negro Choir: *Negro Spirituals—Bye and bye and Joshua fought de Battle of Jericho*. X.9964 (10in., 3s.)

Two separate recordings of Mozart's *Ave Verum* have arrived, both presumably timed to accord with the Church's present season. Each represents high achievement, and difficulty of distinction is increased by the fact that each is a German record. Each performance can be characterised as thorough, meticulous in the extreme, with every detail brought out, every point fully made. But this must not be taken to mean that faithful interpretation is sacrificed to point-making, though Parlophone does, perhaps, lean very slightly in that direction, with its perpetual variation of speed and force. The speed of the Polydor performance is on the slow side, at times indeed almost stopping dead. On the whole, I prefer Parlophone, in spite of the Irmeler Choir's frequent tendency to be slightly out of tune. Parlophone, too, give on the reverse side the lovely Bach Passion Chorale (the melody of which, often sung in England to *O Sacred Head, sore wounded*, is by Hassler). The title *Transeamus* on the Polydor record is insufficient for tracing the piece, but it is not one of great significance. The orchestral accompaniments (which Parlophone give) are not specially important, but make for perfection. The Polydor record will be preferred by all who like the *Ave Verum* as slow as possible.

Up to the present very little sixteenth-century church music has been made available for the gramophone—and how much other church music of real value exists? The *Toronto Mendelssohn Choir's* record is excellent, and for anyone to whom Palestrina is more than a name little more need be said. But when will performers and companies give adequate titles? Do they really expect everyone who takes their music seriously to wade through (in this instance) all the Palestrina that is in print, in order to find these particular pieces? One can only say (and it is a great deal to say) that this record is far too good for one to be able to criticise it without having the printed music before one's eyes. It is also a strong argument for the possibilities of choirs of mixed voices in this class of music.

*Regal's Hymn Selection* consists of *All people that on earth do dwell* (The Old Hundredth), *Holy, holy, holy, I heard the Voice of Jesus say, O God, our Help* (St. Anne), *Lord of our life, O worship the King, The day Thou gavest*, and *Abide with me*. Each is sung to its best-known tune, so that the label is quite incorrect in calling them all traditional. One verse of each is sung, all in four-part harmony, in straightforward, solid style. There are no faults worth mentioning, except perhaps slight stodginess, especially in speed.

Of the *Winner* record, the titles speak for themselves. All one need say is that there is high efficiency in grandiose treatment, with no pretence at refinement. There is a special effect in *Onward, Christian soldiers*; the brass of the band play a sort of extra verse by themselves in the middle.

*Platoff's Song* is, surely, quite the most amazing thing that even the *Don Cossacks* have done—at any rate, for sheer excitement, with shrill whistling and screaming. The Tchaikovsky is a lovely contrast, with great musical beauty.

On the *B.B.C. Choir* record, *O worship the King* appeals to me, because it is a fine tune sung in unison, which is what, above all, a hymn should be. *Oh day of rest* would be impeccable if the tune and everything else were not at times drowned by the bass. It is sung to *The Church's one foundation* tune.

The *Negro Choir's* record may be recommended to anyone who likes *Negro Spirituals* in choral form rather than as solos, or who wants variety from Robeson and other soloists. The only faults are indistinctness of the top part in the refrain of *Bye and bye*, and slimy harmony at the end of this number.

### HIS MASTER'S VOICE.

John Goss and Cathedral Male Quartet: *Sea Shanties; Haul away, Joe, What shall we do with the drunken sailor?* (arr. R. R. Terry), *Fire down below* and *Hullabaloo, Balay* (arr. Harris). B.2420 (10in., 3s.).

The Choir of H.M. Chapels Royal: *Jerusalem* (Blake and C. H. H. Parry), and *There shall a Star* (Mendelssohn). E.451 (10in., 4s. 6d.).

There has been a long hold-up in the flood we were having of *Sea-Shanty* records. All the more welcome to this, one of the best, to say the least. The four Shanties are four of the most irresponsible, giddiest and wittiest, and they are perfectly done. There is only one thing—couldn't the next risk being unaccompanied?

This is quite the best record yet issued of what looks like being our second National Anthem (and a splendid one at that)—*Jerusalem*. What about a Community singing record of it? *There shall a Star* is very well worth having; but I still find the Chapel Royal Choir's words practically unintelligible, at any rate on their records.

C. M. C.

### COMMUNITY SINGING.

Why two records of Community Singing have been sent to me rather than to my colleague of the choral section, I don't know, but as there is no time for me to send them on to him, perhaps he and my readers will forgive me for poaching. H.M.V. B.2424 (10 in., 3s.) contains two hymns: *Ye Watchers and Ye Holy ones* (sung to the tune of the "Easter Alleluia"), and *Jesu, Lover of my Soul* (to a fine tune in the minor). I thoroughly enjoyed these; the effect of the 10,000 voices under the leadership of Sir Hugh Allen is really inspiring; it makes one want to join in too! *Marching through Georgia* and *Fire down below* (H.M.V. B.2423, 10in., 3s.) do not give opportunities for quite such massive tone. But they are done with spirit, and the delightful singing and choir direction of John Goss in the solo parts are alone worth three shillings. These may be freak records, but they seem to me to have been well worth doing.

P. L.





## BAND RECORDS

A *Cornish Carnival* invites comparison with some of the movements in the military band suites of Holst and Vaughan-Williams to its very decided detriment. The playing of the **Beltona Military Band** is very good, as it is in a trifle called *Bells across the Meadow* on the reverse (Beltona 1168). The latter is also issued on Aco G. 16160 backed in this case by a very bright performance of the *March* from Luigini's *Ballet Russe* played by the **Welsh Guards Band** which is worth more musically than the other two items put together. In all cases the recording is good although a certain amount of the clarity is lost and a hardness and shrillness imposed whenever a medium volume is exceeded. I can best describe this by comparing it to the quality obtained from a wireless loud-speaker when the valves are overloaded. Possibly the causes are similar but I leave it to more technical minds to say whether this is so or whether it is mere coincidence.

For some reason or other the **Coldstream Guards Band** seems to have gained less from the new process of recording than any other band and a comparison between their new records and some made ten years ago reveals the latter as surprisingly good and almost able to hold their own. In *Colonel Bogey* the lilt which should make this march so attractive has quite eluded Lieut.-Evans. *Youth and Vigour* (H.M.V., B.2408), a much less interesting march, is both played and recorded far better. In the former the bass section of the band is distinctly below par.

It is a real pleasure to welcome the **Irish Guards Band** back to the gramophone world. This band made many good records in the past but it must be some years since they made any new ones. The Imperial Company deserve our thanks for reintroducing the band at such a modest price as two shillings per disc. *Martial Moments* (1717) is played crisply at a quick tempo and the recording of the middle of the band is exceptionally good. The other record issued this month contains *In a Chinese Temple Garden*, and *The Ride of the Valkyries* (1716). The former is well played but I do not like the phrasing in the latter, and the band employed is too small to do real justice to this difficult and exciting music.

The **Silver Stars Band** have made a splendid record of the ever-green "1812" *Overture*. (Regal G. 1039). The detail is clean, the recording of the tympani, cymbals and other gadgets is good, and the tone throughout very rich and full. For once the tubular bells are in tune. The playing of the same band in *Faithful and Bold* and *The Happy Warrior* (G. 8775) is the best march playing I have heard by this band yet. This is an excellent record in every way.

Everyone concerned with the making of the record of Victor Herbert's *Suite of Serenades—Spanish, Chinese, Cuban, and Oriental*—(Voc. K.05293) deserves hearty congratulations. The playing of the **Life Guards Band** is impeccable, the recording superb, the music well off the beaten track, and the surface much improved. This is the most faithful military band record made by the Vocalion Company yet, and ranks as one of the best half-dozen made by any Company, if not actually the best. The basses are beautifully fat and the tympani have a real "ping." The suite is very pleasant light music and a good antidote to jazz. In my copy the labels are on the wrong sides.

The record of *Onward, Christian Soldiers* and *Abide with me* recorded at Whitefield's Tabernacle, London by a **Choir, Organ and Band of H.M. Scots Guards** (Winner 4582) belongs to the class advertised as "mighty." I personally do not like the dramatic pauses in the latter but the recording and general effect are decidedly good.

I suppose it is too much to expect even Sousa to be at his best always, but surely there are plenty of fine marches by him still unrecorded without having recourse to such pot boilers as *The Thunderer* and *The March of the Mitten Men* (Zono 2858). The former is largely composed of fanfares and the latter of a very paltry arrangement of *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. Judging both

by its title and by its quality of tone the **Philadelphia Band** is an American Band. At all events it is a very fine and very large band. This record, both for playing and recording, is comparable with those made by Pryor's and Sousa's Band respectively and issued by the H.M.V. Company during the last few months.

The distinctive tone colours of the oboe and clarinet are very faithfully reproduced and form a nice contrast in *Une Soirée près du lac* and *Loin du Bal* respectively (Actuelle 11267). Both these pieces are graceful, the latter being a waltz of the old-fashioned tuneful kind. The playing of the **Garde Républicaine Band** is very delicate and satisfying.

*The Battle of Waterloo* (Col. 9184) is a sheer waste of fine recording and good playing by the **Grenadier Guards Band**. The services of the full band, a drum and fife band and the Scots Guards pipers are all utilized in turn and the piece is a pot-pourri of *The March-sellaise*, *Men of Harlech*, *The British Grenadiers*, a couple of hymns and a few other oddments interspersed with bugle calls and the whole resting on a strongly painted background of battle noises and other unpleasant sounds.

In the *Poet and Peasant Overture* played by the **Coldstream Guards Band** (H.M.V. C.1315) an old arrangement is used, I fancy. At any rate, I much prefer it to the arrangement used by the Grenadier Guards Band in their record of this overture issued last year. I wish I could say the same about the playing, but I must confess that I find the phrasing very lifeless and the general interpretation much more calculated to reveal the brilliance of the performers than anything else. The recording is excellent.

W. A. C.

## MISCELLANEOUS

The new H.M.V. records (C.1311 and 1312, 12in., 4s. 6d. each) of *Instruments of the Orchestra* are a great acquisition, which will be appreciated by most people; needless to say, the recording and arrangement are excellent. Personally, I should like also a record with the instruments of the dance band separately treated. Another record which I omitted last month was that of the **Gresham Singers**, admirably recorded in *Sweet Kitty Clover* and *Wake, Miss Lindy* (H.M.V., B.2410, 3s.). In the mid-month list there is **Sir Harry Lauder** in *Doughie the Baker* and the evergreen *I Love a Lassie*, as lively and infectious as ever (D.1197, 12in., 6s. 6d.); **Jack Smith**, still able to charm us, in *I'm tellin' the birds* and *There ain't no maybe* (B.2414 3s.); **Correll and Gosden** in the fascinating *Meadow Lark* (B.2412, 3s.); and **John McCormack** marvellously sincere in *When Twilight comes* and *Calling me back to you* (D.A.840, 6s.). **Marek Weber and his Orchestra** break up a Strauss waltz into two parts on a ten-inch record, *Tales from the Vienna Woods* (B.2406, 3s.), with an unexpected and effective steel guitar passage at beginning and end. This is a superb record of the Austrian waltz lilt, and I must add a word of praise for the **Salon Orchestra** in that favourite of mine *Un peu d'Amour* (shall I ever forget the Elsie Southgate record of it on Zonophone ten years ago?) and *Little Star* (B.2415, 3s.); and for **Frank Banta** in piano versions, not for dancing, of two popular tunes, *For my Sweetheart* and *Just a Little longer* (B.2411, 3s.). This is not for every taste, but it is, in its way, almost perfect.

The March Beltona list has several vocal records in which **Eva Sternroyd** (a light soprano with considerable colour in her voice), **Eric Wyndham** (a good tenor) **Charles Barry** (a baritone whose fault, if any, is that he is a trifle too refined for his songs), and **John Roberts** (that reliable baritone), take part. Perhaps the best is 1161 (2s. 6d.) *Hello! Swanee, Hello!* and *All's well that ends well*; but all are of a good standard and the accompaniments are more than adequate. So is the unnamed accompanist of **Gordon Taylor**, who has a slight edge in his violin playing (at least on my H.M.V. machine), but is none the less very desirable. *Because I love you*, the best waltz of recent months, and *Perhaps you'll think of me* are on 1156 (2s. 6d.).

The only March Regal in my heap is an irresistible xylophone record by **Victor Stirling**, with first class accompaniment, in C. F. Abbey's *Snatches* and *Danse d'Hesdin* (G.8777, 2s. 6d.). The tunes and the playing of them make this easily the best xylophone record of the month; but there is a peculiar percussion effect at some points in the recording.

The March Brunswicks are, I fancy, the first which I have heard which were all except one pressed in the new British Brunswick factory, and they are worthy of high praise for surface and finish. **Mario Chamlee** sings *My Dreams* and *Parted* as well as, granting his peculiar diction, they are likely to be sung (10230, 4s. 6d.). **Nick Lucas** seems better than ever in *Hello Bluebird* and *I've got the Girl* (3370, 3s.), his own playing of the guitar to Sammy Stept's piano



accompaniment being as agreeable an addition as the accompaniments and whistling (by **Carson Robison**) in **Wendell Hall's** record of *I'm telling the birds*—contrast with Jack Smith—and *Take in the Sun, hang out the Moon* (3387, 3s.). **The Merry-makers** (alias Revellers, alias Singing Sophomores) are wonderful in *Down on the banks of the old Yazoo*, a good tune, and the foolish *Sunny Disposish* (3312, 3s.); and finally there is a brilliant xylophone record by **Joseph Green** with good orchestral accompaniment of *Dancing Stars* and *Dance of the Toy Regiment* (3347, 3s.). In fact, the whole bunch of these Brunswicks can be strongly recommended.

The March Imperials also contain a xylophone solo by no less a celebrity than **Teddy Brown** in *Poet and Peasant* overture and *Light Cavalry* overture (1718, 2s.), so that this is distinctly a xylophone month. But I should buy the other two in preference to this because of the music and because of the inferior accompaniment. Hawaiian guitar lovers will find *Kailima* and a *Hawaiian Waltz Medley* finely played and recorded by **Ferera** and **Paaluki** (1715, 2s.) and admirers of **Talbot O'Farrell** will welcome two records of Irish Ballads, with a cheerful version of the *Froth Blowers' Anthem* on the fourth side (1722, 1723, 2s. each). **Irving Kaufman** is rather late in the day with his songs (1721, 2s.) and **Charles Keene** is a trifle crude in the treatment of his (1720, 2s.); *Just a Bird's Eye View* deserves more subtlety, for it is a charming tune. I may have a weakness for the particular type of soft American voice which is well represented by **Evelyn Preer** in *Sadie Green* and *No one but you* (1719, 2s.), but I am prepared to state that it is the pick of the list and well worth getting.

The Columbias are a good lot, without any outstanding novelties. It is delightful to get **Vaughn de Leath** again, in *Susie's Feller* and *That's a good girl*, at her insinuating best (4274, 3s.). **Norah Blaney**, too, well accompanied, brings pleasant memories with *If you hadn't gone away* and *While my pretty one sleeps* (4273, 3s.). **Elsie Carlisle**, with the help of the **Gilt-Edged Four** (4275, 3s.), has made her best record that I've heard. There's a **Percival Mackey's** Band selection from *My Son John* (4193, 12in., 4s. 6d.), which is up to standard, but not particularly attractive in itself. That reminds me to thank the management of the Queen's Theatre for letting me hear *Queen High*, one of the best musical plays I've seen for a long time and most refreshing as a contrast to *The Blue Mazurka*. No one who likes real comedy acting, good dancing and good tunes should miss *Queen High*; if the singing and the costumes were equally good, it would be the best play of its sort that I ever remember. The **Singing Sophomores** are also in the Columbia list (4193, 3s.); **Layton and Johnstone** (4267 and 4268, 3s. each), best in the former; **Vivian Foster** (4265, 3s.), in his usual vein; and the **J. H. Squire Celeste Octet** in *The Road to Loch Lomond* and *Napoli*, the latter spoilt by **Eric Courtland's** singing, on 4264 (3s.), and a record of *Bird Imitations* (4263, 3s.) by **Edward Avis**, which I leave to the Editor to report upon.

Out of a dozen records from the *Actuelle* March bulletin my favourite is **Willard Robison** singing *The Devil is afraid of Music* and *Deep River Blues* to his own piano accompaniments (11282, 2s. 6d.); it has a subtlety which lifts it high out of the ruck. The most amazing is a mellophone solo by **Goof Moyer** (11280, 2s. 6d.). Is a mellophone similar to a goofus? It is very varied. **Cliff Edwards** is as adroit as ever in *I ain't got nobody* and *Who could be more wonderful than you?* (11290, 3s.); **Jay Flippen** and his Gang thrash through *Sadie Green* and *Baby Face* with great spirit (11286, 2s. 6d.); **Charles Leggett**, needless to say, plays cornet solos of *Love's old sweet song* and *Oh that we two were maying*, as almost only he can play the cornet (11279, 2s. 6d.); and **Frank Ferera** never disappoints in his Hawaiian records (11278, 2s. 6d.). The others seem, in contrast, less good, but the recording is good throughout.

Of the Winner records one stands out—**Bobby Gray** in *Nothing else to do* and *Cuckoo* (4590, 2s. 6d.). He has all the mastery of the whispering style of singing these little rubbishes, and where he falls short of perfection is in rhythm and, every now and then, in interpretation. But he is thoroughly good this month. **Phil Russell** plays *Banjo-mania*, which still seems to me one of the best banjo tunes, and *Get Goin'* (4591, 2s. 6d.). **Ronnie Earl** and **Gerald Adams** do their best with songs of which I am heartily sick. The Winner recording is much improved.

Of the Aco April records I like particularly the delicious drag in **Estelle Brody's** voice in *A little bit bad* and *It doesn't matter who she is* (G.16173, 2s. 6d.), and am impressed, as usual, by **Billy Desmond** who manages to make something of the much advertised *Shepherd of the Hills* (G.16163, 2s. 6d.); the good tune *Swingin' along* on the reverse is entrusted to **Bobby Sanders**. A very popular record, in which Desmond also shines, will be the *Frothblowers'*

*Anthem* and a vocal selection from *Sunny* (G.16166, 2s. 6d.); and **Fred Gibson** has a pair of better than most comic songs on G.16165 (2s. 6d.). **Deslys and Clark** (also on Zono.) are very attractive in *Sunday* and *All I want to do* (G.16162, 2s. 6d.), but **G. H. Elliott's** *Black Bottom* is a horror after the charming *Actuelle* version, which I praised last month; otherwise I daresay I should have found it good enough (G.16161, 2s. 6d.).

*Caprice Viennois* is amusing as a mandoline solo, and **Mario de Pietro** adds his own *Sunshine of Naples* on the reverse of G.16158 (2s. 6d.); and I recommend to neophytes a good cheap record of the Hoffmann *Barcarolle* and Elgar's *Salt d'Amour* by the **Piccadilly Salon Orchestra** (G.16159, 2s. 6d.).

The April Vocalions are a very creditable selection. Two **Mikado** records (X.9962, 9963, 3s. each) continue the Gilbert and Sullivan series and I understand will be reviewed in due course by Mr. Cameron. **Gladys Moncrieff** has won many admirers in *The Blue Mazurka* at Daly's and they will enjoy her revival of favourite numbers from the *Maid of the Mountains*, *Katinka*, and *The Chocolate Soldier* (K.05294-5, 12in., 4s. 6d. each), while followers of **Madame Lydia Kyasht** (and they are many, throughout the country) will be glad to have another record of **Medvedeff's Balalaika Orchestra**, which plays in her cabaret show (X.9967, 3s.). The *Russian Legend* is a beautiful melody. Cinema organ lovers will find what they seek in X.9966 (3s.), two song-tunes played by **F. Hampton-Smith** on the fine *Tivoli* organ.

**Albert Whelan** provides the surprise of the month with a record which everyone must buy, *So will I* and *Some Girl* (X.9970, 3s.). He has done the whispering conversational trick to perfection. **Gwen Farrar** and **Billy Mayerl** have made their best record so far, *Mandy and I think of You* (X.9969, 3s.), and **Leslie Hutchinson** and **Opal Cooper** from the *Café de Paris* are better than last month: *Mamma's gone young* is well worth getting (X.9968, 3s.). I still want a solo by the pianist.

The April Zonophones are finely recorded and there is no excuse for any singer to be indistinct even at a first hearing. On the other hand, there is a certain stridency when **Clarkson Rose** (2883) or **Barrington Hooper** (2878) or **Arthur Cox** (2879) or both the last (2877) open their lungs. With all deference to the sophisticated I think the sentimentality of *The Hymns my Mother taught me* (2878) could hardly be better done than by Hooper and the chorus. *The Story of the Rosary* is on the reverse. The **Brox Sisters** are less interesting than usual this month, singing gently in a mood of desolation (2883). **Warner and Yorke** on the piano give *Crazy Quilt* and *You can't hang out with Annie* (a new tune to me) with what the bulletin calls "smart duet" work (2882), and **Deslys and Clark** sing rather more hackneyed tunes (2885) than on their Aco record, but equally well. All are 2s. 6d. records. There is a terrific 12in. record of the **Associated Glee Clubs of America** singing *Where'er you walk* and *Bedouin Song* (A.314, 4s.). The volume of noise is very impressive and the piano accompaniment holds its own gallantly.

Two twelve-inch Parlophones by the **Dajos Bela's String Orchestra** (E.10547 and 10548, 4s. 6d.) are absolutely first class; the former has two waltzes, *Gold and Silver* and *Goldregen*, the latter **Labitsky's** *The Herd Girl's Dream* and *Wedding Serenade* by Klose. If it's to be one or the other I should choose the latter.

The April Regals (2s. 6d. each) arrived late. *My Son John* Selection (G.8778) and *Princess Charming* selection (G.8806) are well made by the **New Regenta Orchestra**, and there is a rousing record (G.8791) of *Community Singing* at Bradford and Leicester in *John Peel* and *Here's a Health unto His Majesty*: the singing is ragged, but the spirit is strong. **Kenneth Walters** devotes his fine voice to two ballads by Haydn Wood, *Sometimes at Dawn* and *Valley of Roses* (G.8795), while **Ernest Pike** chooses lamentable rubbish (G.8794). **Fred Douglas** (G.8797, 8798, 8805) and **Tom Gilbert** (8799) are all right in popular songs, but I do not recommend the **Mexborough Excelsior Male Quartette** as models to imitate (G.8796), though they are unable to spoil the beauty of *Drink to me only and Sweet and Low*.

The H.M.V. April bulletin only adds four records to my collection: **De Groot** and the **Piccadilly Orchestra** in two well-established caresses (B.2418, 3s.); **Melville Gideon** in an equally velvety mood in *Because I love you*, a good tune for his singing and playing, and *In a little Spanish town* (B.2421, 3s.); **Gene Austin**, pleasant in *I've got the girl*; and **Johnny Marvin**, with ukulele, piano and clarinets, very attractive in *Deed I do* (B.2422, 3s.); and **Ferera**, and **Paaluhi**, who crop up here and there in most of the catalogues, in two Hawaiian guitar marches (B.2417, 3s.). All four are, for the right mood, exactly what is wanted.

PEPPERING.



## NEW-POOR RECORDS

Machine used, Peridulce cabinet; sound-box, Peridulce; needles, Euphonic.

ACO.—The best performance and the best recording of Roger Quilter's *Drink to me only* (2s. 6d.) is sung by Harry Goddard. The reverse is an entirely satisfactory *To Anthea*. Recording of these pianoforte accompaniments continues to improve—this one is a model.

BELTONA.—I think the best of these is Eva Sternroyd's *Just a Cottage Small* (2s. 6d.). The voice is a real SOPRANO and the recording of the Piano accompaniment is just what it should be. Next I shall put Leslie J. Protheroe's PIANO solo *Allegro in F major* (2s. 6d.) excellently recorded. POPULAR SONG. John Roberts sings *Take in the Sun, Hang out the Moon* (2s. 6d.) PIANO DUET, for dancing to, *Black Bottom* (2s. 6d.). Most of the tone lies in the treble so that it will come out quite well on small machines. MILITARY BAND, *Cornish Carnival*, (2s. 6d.). This is a charming setting of the same old folk-song tune that forms the basis of "The Floral Dance." The cleverest writing, the best playing and the best recording I yet have in a BANJO solo is *Banjo Deliriums* (2s. 6d.); a really high-brow friend of mine failed to reproach me for playing it to him. JAZZ. *High, high up in the Hills* (2s. 6d.), with the unmistakable and most charming voice of John Thorne singing the vocal refrain, if my ears are at all to be relied on.

BRUNSWICK.—Many congratulations indeed to British Brunswick, Ltd., that they are now pressing their own records at their new London factory; the records are thin and hard and have a good surface. I may not speak of the expensive records here but I must mention the following 3s. ones. *Gipsy Moon*, with *Farewell* on the reverse, played by a Gipsy SMALL ORCHESTRA. An altogether charming pair in real Tzigane style and with the piano part coming out as it can do only with Brunswick recording. MILITARY BAND, with side drums, *Stradella Overture*. The band is catalogued as Italian and the playing is equal to that of the best Italian band I ever heard; the recording is magnificent. There are two DANCE recordings, full of tone, sweet, solid and forward to a degree never yet approached by any record in my collection:—VINCENT LOPEZ plays *Hello, Bluebird*, and ISHAM JONES plays *It Made you Happy*.

HOMOCORD.—The wholly delightful SMALL MILITARY BAND this month have two half-crown discs: *La Sirene*, Overture, Auber; and *Serenata* (Op. 15) Moszkowski. There is also an entirely pleasing half-crown disc by an INSTRUMENTAL QUINTETTE comprising Violin, 'Cello, Harp, Organ and Celeste: they play *Dance of the Blue Butterfly*, David George, with *Serenade des Mandolines*, Desormes. I hope we may get one of these every month in future.

REGAL.—I am glad to see some 12 in. records this month. The light and brilliant Regal PIANOFORTE recording is a perfect expression for Mr. Edward Isaac's playing of *Moment Musical*, Schubert, (4s. 0d.) with three other short pieces, on a disc packed full of joy.

WINNER.—Every lover of HYMNS has already bought the *Abide with Me* (2s. 6d.) by a band, choir and organ, recorded by land-line from Whitfield's Tabernacle. The same organ may be heard in *The Tempest* (2s. 6d.) composed and played by Spencer Shaw. The WHISPERING BARITONE sings *Cuckoo* (2s. 6d.).

VELVET FACE.—Now here is a record that raised me to a greater pitch of enthusiasm than anything I have heard since Percy Grainger's pianoforte sonata first came out. Edward Halland sings *Why do the Nations* (4s. 0d.) to a full orchestra including timpani freely used and fully recorded. The pace is magnificent, the voice as clear as a bell, and the expressed energy is dramatic to a degree. The reverse is just as good; in *The Trumpet shall sound* both voice and trumpet parts are in every way satisfactory, and the orchestral work is thoroughly good. ORCHESTRA, with kettle-drums, *Le Carneval Romain* (4s. 0d.), Berlioz. A grand performance by Boosey's Concert Orchestra under Eugene Goossens senior, most vigorously recorded. Zacharewitsch, with his VIOLIN records well electrically—not so wiry as most—in *Menuet*, Bach, (2s. 6d.). The piano accompaniment is clear and proportionate. Morlais Morgan, BARITONE, sings *Beware of the Maidens* (2s. 6d.).

ZONOPHONE.—A record of compositions by an American composer and played by an American MILITARY BAND, *The Thunderer*, Sousa (2s. 6d.). I think this is the best of the Sousa marches and the recording is wonderful.

ULTIMATE SELECTION.—\*\*\*BASS, *Why do the Nations* (V.F.) BARITONE: *Beware of the Maidens* (V.F.). PIANOFORTE: (12in.): *Moment Musical*, REGAL (10in.) *Allegro in F major*, BELTONA. ORCHESTRA, with kettledrums: *Le Carneval Romain* (V.F.). SMALL ORCHESTRA: *Gipsy Moon* (BRUNSWICK). QUINTET: *Dance of the Blue Butterfly* (HOMO.). VIOLIN: *Menuet*, Bach, (V.F.) MILITARY BAND (3s.): *Stradella Overture* (BRUNSWICK); (2s. 6d.) *Serenata* (Op. 15) Moszkowski (HOMO). SOPRANO: *Just a Cottage Small* (BELTONA). POPULAR SONG: *Cuckoo* (WINNER). MILITARY BAND MARCH: *The Thunderer* (ZONO). PIANO DUET; (Jazz): *Black Bottom* (BELTONA). FOXTROTS: (3s.) *Hello Bluebird*, and *It made you happy* (BRUNSWICK); (2s. 6d.) *High, High up in the Hills* (BELTONA). ORGAN: *The Tempest* (Winner). H. T. B.



## DANCE NOTES

By J. W. G.

All the following are fox-trots unless otherwise mentioned. Thick type indicates such excellence on both sides that the record can be bought safely. Two stars and one star are the next grades, and no star at all indicates only a moderately good record. The distinctly inferior ones are left out. The obvious comments to make are the painful glut of Eastern tunes this month, and aren't we going to get tired of *Shepherd of the Hills*?

ACO (2s. 6d.).

Congratulations to the Aco Company on a quite exceptionally good set of records. The Lyrics excel themselves in G.16167, as does Harry Bidgood in G. 16171, the others being well behind them.

G.16167.—**Stop it, I love it and A little nightie hanging on the line** (The Lyrics).

G.16168.—\*\**Everybody's got a girl but me* and \*\**Drifting and dreaming* (The Lyrics). These are not such good tunes, but so well played.

G.16169.—\* *High, high up in the hills* and *A little boy, a little girl, a little moon* (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra).

G.16170.—\*\* *Hello, Bluebird!* and \**When lights are low in Cairo* (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). The latter tune is above the average Eastern tune.

G.16171.—**Oh! how I love Bulgarians** (one-step) (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). This is a very close second to the Columbia version. **I've got a C sharp Mamma** (Harry Bidgood's Orchestra). A capital Blues fox-trot.

ACTUELLE (2s. 6d.).

The Actuelle records can always be relied upon for really fine playing, and this month is no exception.

11268.—\*\**Neapolitan nights* and \**Neath the blue Italian skies* (waltzes) (Nathan Glantz and his Orchestra). Bar the singing—good.

11269.—\*\**Elsie Schultz-en-Heim* (Lew Gold and his Orchestra) and *Yiddisha Charleston* (Nathan Glantz and his Orchestra). The former is an excellent, amusing, medley-like tune; the latter is a poor tune played with a good rhythm.

11270.—\*\**Susie's Feller* (Harry Reser and his Orchestra) and \**I can't get over a girl like you* (Lew Gold and his Orchestra). "Susie's Feller" has a fine Charleston rhythm, whilst the latter is a quick fox-trot.

11271.—**Dismal Desmond** and **My Cutie's due at two to two** (Charleston) (Victor Stirling and his Band).



- 11273.—**Oh! how I love Bulgarians** (Joe Candulla and his Orchestra). Not so good as the Aco record, but first rate. **Bolshevik** (Blue Grass Boys).
- 11275.—**\*\*How could Red Riding Hood** (Tommy Morton's Grangers) and **Lonely acres in the West** (Van and his Orchestra).
- 11276.—**Just a bird's eye view** and **Lay me down to sleep in Carolina** (Sam Lanin and his Orchestra). Both smooth fox-trots.
- 11277.—**\*\*Turkestana** and **\*\*Moon mist** (Casino Dance Orchestra). For those who like Eastern tunes, the former is excellent—the latter reminds me of Red Indians!
- 11289.—**\*\*Heebie Jeebies** and **Black Bottom stomp** (The Red Heads). Very clever syncopation—the latter is not nearly so good as the H.M.V. version.

## BELTONE (2s. 6d.).

These records, as usual, keep up a high standard of excellence, although I have only received two this month.

- 1163.—**\*High, high up in the hills** and **What are we waiting for?** (Palm Beach Players). The latter is a rather dull tune, but both are well played.
- 1164.—**\*\*Lonely eyes** and **\*Climbing up the ladder of love** (Palm Beach Players). The latter is not so good as last month's vocalism.

## BRUNSWICK (3s.).

I cannot help noticing a distinct falling off in these records this month, Vincent Lopez's record being the only outstanding one. However, I look forward to a return to their usual standard next month.

- 3332.—**\*You're burnin' me up** and **Crazy quilt** (The Wolverines). Charleston rhythm.
- 3338.—**\*\*The two of us** and **Don't be angry with me** (Frank Black and his Orchestra). The latter is a poor companion—two's company.
- 3368.—**Hello! Bluebird** and **I'm on my way home** (Vincent Lopez and his Casa Lopez Orchestra).
- 3371.—**\*\*Moonlight on the Ganges** and **Some day** (Jack Denny and his Orchestra). The "Bonnie Laddies" put in some good singing on both of these tunes.
- 3382.—**\*\*My Baby knows how** (Ben Selvin and his Orchestra). Smooth fox-trot. *I never knew what the moonlight could do* (Jack Denny and his Orchestra).

## COLUMBIA (3s.).

The outstanding record here is Ted Lewis's *Bugle Call Rag*. This is really good, but apart from that they are not up to the usual standard. So far I have received no records by the Piccadilly Revels or the Denza bands, which is a pity.

- 4269.—**Bugle call Rag** and **Some of these days** (Ted Lewis and his Band). The latter has singing by Sophie Tucker—personally, I like it.

- 4270.—**\*\*I couldn't blame you** (Percival Mackey's Band). A good Charleston. **\*\*How could Red Riding Hood** (Charleston Serenaders). This is as good playing as I've heard of this tune.
- 4271.—**\*Reaching for the Moon** (Charleston Serenaders) and **\*\*Hello! Bluebird** (Cliquot Club Eskimos). Not so good as Brunswick.
- 4276.—**\*I'm sailing off to China** (Charleston) and **\*Alone in the home** (Blues fox-trot) (Percival Mackey and his Band). Both good rhythmic playing.
- 4279.—**Tiger eyes** and **Mandy** (London Radio Dance Band). Two excellent quick fox-trots.

## H.M.V. (3s.).

The honours go jointly to Paul Whiteman and George Olsen, Jack Hylton being a good runner up in B.5209 and B.5217.

- B.5202.—**\*All alone baby** and **All's well that ends well** (Savoy Orpheans).
- B.5205.—**\*If you can't hold the man you love** and **\*\*She said and I said** (Hylton's Hyltonians). This latter makes me laugh!
- B.5206.—**There ain't no maybe in my baby's eyes** (Charleston) and **It's for you to decide** (Savoy Havana Band). The latter is perhaps a shade "sickly."
- B.5208.—**It doesn't matter who she is** (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra) **\*\*Brown sugar** (Hylton's Hyltonians). Very good rhythmic tune.
- B.5209.—**That's what I say** (Blues) and **Lay me down to sleep in Carolina** (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra). The former is such a good Blues, the latter a fine smooth fox-trot, better than last month's Columbia.
- B.5211.—**\*\*Blame it on the waltz** (waltz) (Jack Hylton and his Band). **\*Ain't she sweet!** (Jack Hylton's Hyltonians).
- B.5212.—**\*\*Swamp Blues** (Blues fox-trot) (Art Landy and his Orchestra) and **Sidewalk Blues** (Blues fox-trot) (Jelly-Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers). Surely all this noise is unnecessary in the latter.
- B.5213.—**\*Honolulu songbird** (Savoy Orpheans) and **Lonely eyes** (Savoy Havana).
- B.5215.—**I've got the girl** (George Olsen and his Music). Moderately fast. **Why d'ya roll those eyes** ("Princess Charming") (Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra). A slow fox-trot, quite exceptionally good.
- B.5217.—**Do the black bottom with me** and **On the beach at Waika Kiki blues** (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra). Two capital tunes from "Blackbirds." The former has a fine yet unobtrusive "Black Bottom rhythm."
- B.5220.—**I've grown so lonesome thinking of you** and **\*\*Blue skies** (Savoy Havana).
- B.5221.—**Dreamy Amazon** (Hylton's Hyltonians). **\*\*Flat-tired papa** (Jack Hylton and his Orchestra). Good slow rhythmic fox-trot.

# GRAMOPHONE



GEMS FROM THE APRIL LIST.					
12-inch. 4/-	A. 314	Bedouin Song	-	-	Foots
	A. 315	Where'er you walk	-	-	Handel
	A. 316	Hallelujah Chorus ("Messiah")	-	-	Haydn
		The Heavens are telling ("Creation")	-	-	Wagner
		Tannhauser - March	-	-	Sibelius
10-inch. 2/6	2880	Finlandia	-	-	Lemare
		Andantino	-	-	Gounod
		Ave Maria	-	-	

ASSOCIATED GLEE CLUBS OF AMERICA.  
BLACK DIAMONDS BAND  
SPENCER SHAW, A.R.C.O. (Grand Organ Solo)  
R. ARNOLD GREIR, F.R.C.O. (Grand Organ)

## Electrical Records



B.5222.—\**Dearie mine* (waltz) (Savoy Orpheans) and *Tell me to-night* (Savoy Havana).

B.5223.—\*\**Tenderly think of me* (R. W. Kahn and his Orchestra) and \**What's the use of crying* (Ted Weems and his Orchestra).

B.5225.—\**Half Moon* (Nat Shilkret and his Orchestra). \**Looking at the world through rose-coloured glasses* (Ted Weems' Pennsylvanians).

#### IMPERIAL (2s.).

This month's issues are infinitely better than last month's, Sam Lanin's Band is a tower of strength.

1709.—\**Here in my arms* and *Tell me you love me* (Buddy Rose and his Orchestra). Quick fox-trots.

1710.—\**Shepherd of the hills* and \**Chilly Billy Wun Lung* (Buddy Rose and his Orchestra).

1711.—*Sunday* and *Lay me down to sleep in Carolina* (Sam Lanin's Troubadours).

1712.—*Susie's Feller* and *Just a Bird's eye view* (Al. Lentz Dance Orchestra). The former a good Charleston tune—the latter a good smooth fox-trot.

1714.—\*\**Here comes Fatima* (Missouri Jazz Band). This is quite good fun taking up bits of other tunes. And *How could Red Riding Hood* (Missouri Jazz Band). Not so good as other records of this tune.

#### PARLOPHONE (2s. 6d.).

Here we have the first recordings of Ebenezer Slydel and his Royal Automobile Club Orchestra, a band that plays pleasantly enough, but without "pep." Cannot we have some more waltzes played by Edith Lorand and her Orchestra?

E.5740.—\*\**Just a bird's eye view* and *Sonny Boy* (Ronnie Munro and his Orchestra). The playing does not do the former tune justice, but I like John Curtis's singing in both.

E.5742.—\**Only you and lonely me* and *Hi-diddle-diddle* (Royal Automobile Club Orchestra).

E.5744.—*Tell me you love me* and \**How could Red Riding Hood* (Royal Automobile Club Orchestra). "Tell me you love me" is played in very quick time: the latter seems to have a little more "pep" than the others.

#### REGAL (2s. 6d.).

G.8800.—\*\**Ukelele dream man* and *Just a rose in a garden of weeds* (waltz) (Raymond Dance Band).

G.8802.—*But not to-day* ("Lido Lady") and *Try again to-morrow* ("Lido Lady") (Raymond Dance Band).

G.8803.—\*\**Mock the mocking bird* and \**Lonely eyes* (Raymond Dance Band).

G.8804.—\**Brown Sugar and Petrushka* (Raymond Dance Band).

#### VOCALION (3s.).

X9971.—\*\**The more we are together* (Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra). As a Blaster of Ye Ancient Order, I praise this as the best record I've heard of this anthem. \**When lights are low in Cairo* (Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra).

X9973.—*I've got the girl* and *Lonely Eyes* (Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra).

X.9974.—\*\**Why do ya roll those eyes?* ("Princess Charming") and \**Lantern of Love* ("Castles in the Air") (Teddy Brown and his Café de Paris Band). The former is a good second to Paul Whiteman's record (H.M.V.).

#### WINNER (2s. 6d.).

For the Winner this month, Alfredo and his Band have put in some good work, and I very much like the playing of Leon Van Straten and his Orchestra.

4584.—\**Cross your heart* ("Queen High") and \*\**Silver Rose* ("Blackbirds") (Alfredo and his Band). The latter a good Charleston rhythm.

4585.—*In our love canoe* and *My Cutie's due at two to two to-day* (Alfredo and his Band).

4592.—\*\**In a little Spanish Town* (waltz) (Leon Van Straten and his Orchestra), played just the least bit too slowly, and *Talking to the moon* (Leon Van Straten and his Orchestra). Badly spoiled by the singing.

#### ZONOPHONE (2s. 6d.).

It is very nice to see the record by the International Novelty Quartet, and I do hope the Company will give us more by them. Their waltz from "Les Cloches de Corneville" is a delight.

2876.—*Chimes of Normandy* (waltz) and *The Lovers* (Schottische) (International Novelty Quartet).

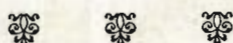
2887.—*Tell me that you love me* and \**My baby knows how* (Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band).

2888.—\**Crazy words, crazy tune* and *Lonely eyes* (Devonshire Restaurant Dance Band).

2889.—*Hello! Swanee, hello!* and *She keeps me in the dark* (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).

2890.—*Swinging along* and \**Sonny boy* (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).

2892.—\**Blondy* and \**Shepherd of the hills* (Bert Firman's Dance Orchestra).



## TRADE WINDS AND IDLE ZEPHYRS

### Beethoven Celebrations

The Columbia people never do things by halves. They inaugurated the Beethoven Centenary (or Centennial) celebrations on March 10th with a rich and delicate luncheon at the Savoy Hotel, where Sir Hugh Allen, the Principal of the Royal College of Music, presided over a gathering of about a hundred and fifty people, which included so many musical celebrities that even the Principal of the Royal Academy of Music was relegated to the second row of tables. The chairman's speech hardly raised the emotional temperature to the height necessary for drinking Beethoven's toast in silence, and Mr. Paul Booth, who followed, did small justice to the Federation of British Music Industries which he represented. But Sir Thomas Beecham was in first-class fettle; urbane and mischievous as ever, he gave the dejected journalists some capital copy, flung them "the B.B.C., the brigands of music" like a sop, twitted the assembly, stroked his cheek, called the gramophone an agreeable toy, paid a fine tribute to Sir Henry Wood, who sat opposite him, and succeeded in amusing and interesting everyone present. Sir Henry spoke wisely and sadly, yet with his usual blunt humour; Mr. Mewburn Levien, in a model speech, sketched the connection between Beethoven and the Royal Philharmonic Society, and Sir George Croydon

Marks, with massive words, presented a gold watch to the District Messenger boy who had taken the Columbia "masters" across the Atlantic. Then we dispersed.

It was Columbia's show, and it was admirably done, broadly schemed, and successful in detail. We yield to no one in appreciation of the great undertaking which the Columbia issues of Beethoven records represent. It is probably the finest in the long list of fine Columbia achievements. The magnitude of the task which their recording rooms in London (with a few exceptions) carried out for the American Centennial Committee is shown by a glance at the list of Beethoven's works recorded: The nine symphonies complete; the violin and piano concertos; the *Coriolanus* and *Egmont* overtures; the *Kreutzer*, *Moonlight*, *Pathetic*, *Appassionata*, *Cello*, and *Piano in A major* sonatas; the *B flat Trio*, Op. 97; and five string quartets of Op. 18, the three of Op. 59, not to mention Op. 95, 127, 130, and 135, and the interesting "Beethoven Sketches." The quality of the interpretations equally is shown by the list of performers and conductors.

It is a staggering achievement to have made the records at all on such a princely scale, but no less thorough and large-minded has been the organisation for disseminating them in this country. A series of fourteen lectures (with a foreword by Sir W. H. Hadow), which can be illustrated by the gramophone records, has been



circulated to no fewer than 25,000 schools, colleges, and musical institutions throughout Great Britain. The Beethoven afternoon concerts at Harrod's, with Columbia artists and orchestras, were packed.

But, perhaps the proudest thought of all, when one contemplates the Centennial Celebrations, is that, as Sir Hugh Allen said, "it will be British-made music that will make an International Beethoven Celebration."

### Articles on Beethoven

No general articles on Beethoven or his compositions will be found in THE GRAMOPHONE, partly because space is at a discount, and chiefly because the subject is so thoroughly treated in other contemporary publications. *The Musical Times* for March 1st, for instance, is full of interesting Beethoven essays and illustrations; Mr. Sydney Grew, always with his eye on the gramophonic section of readers of *The British Musician*, is dealing fully with the centenary, and gives useful musical illustrations. "Schaunard," Mr. A. J. Sheldon, and Dr. Eaglefield Hull discuss various aspects of the composer in the March number of *Musical Opinion*, while the last-named has begun a series, "An Introduction to Beethoven's Music," in *The Monthly Musical Record*. *The Phonograph*, our American cousin, has the first part of an article on Beethoven's symphonies, by Richard G. Appel, in the March issue, with a list of recordings. These are only a few of the many important articles appearing at this time, but they can all be recommended to those of our readers who want more than they will find in THE GRAMOPHONE.

On the whole, at their different prices, the best Beethoven Numbers that we have come across so far are the *Radio Times* (2d.) and *Music and Letters* (5s.).

### Sir Walford Davies

Perhaps the most practical and stimulating words about Beethoven at this moment from the gramophone point of view is the introduction which Sir Walford Davies wrote for the H.M.V. list of Beethoven Centenary records. This is a booklet which every one of our readers should procure. Programmes of Beethoven Celebrations, in which H.M.V. or Columbia records are used, are reaching us from every direction, most of them sensibly arranged and annotated.

### Important

As well as putting aside a room for the benefit of members of the National Gramophonic Society who want to hear the records before buying them, Messrs. Murdoch of 463, Oxford Street, London, W.1, have consented to keep in the same room the Lifebelt, both types of Weight Adjuster, the Wilson Protractor and possibly also a complete Balmain gramophone with Wilson horn, for demonstration purposes. It will therefore no longer be necessary for our readers—especially new readers—to force their way into the cellars of the London Office of THE GRAMOPHONE in order to inspect these gadgets. They can go straight to Murdoch's, where they will receive every courtesy and attention.

### A Record Turnover

This does not refer to trade prosperity, but to a device for feeding the turn-table automatically with a dozen records from a magazine, which has apparently been given to the world by the Victor people in America. "Bill Adams" is always inventing machinery for changing records automatically, by the inspiration of Heath Robinson: but one may assume that this Victor instrument has really surmounted the obstacles and is compact, fool-proof and kind to records. Has it surmounted also the problem of the double-sided record?

### The British Industries Fair

The paragraph on this page last month was optimistically inaccurate. Several important firms were not exhibiting at the White City—The Gramophone Co., the Columbia Graphophone Co., the Orchorsol Co., the E.M.G., the Dousona, the U-phone and the Murdoch Trading Co., for example. But all the same it was a very comprehensive show, admirably arranged. The Gilbert "Super" gramophones, from Sheffield, with their "bugle" tone-arms, had an excellent position in the passage leading to the Music Section, where our representative found the King inspecting Unbreakable Records at the Duophone stand, and the Queen stopping to look at Garrard motors. Sesame cabinets were well displayed by Messrs. Bournemouth Arundel and Co., the Pearlstone

and an astounding range of gramophone springs caught the eye on Jaccard's stand; all the models of Collaro motors were attractively ranged; Aco, Brunswick, Imperial, Linguaphone and Vocalion records were shown and heard to the best advantage, and of gramophones the Perophone, Cliftophone, Duophone, Itonia, T.M.S., Golden Melody, Fullotone, and Peter Pan models seemed to attract plenty of attention. One thing which our representative had hoped to see—but it was not there—was the "Brown" Record Storing Cabinet from Glasgow, of which we have had interesting reports; and another was the full range of Decca, Dulcephone, Melogram, and Dulceola models, which gave place to a display of Jazz outfits on Messrs. Barnett Samuel and Co.'s stand. All that he brought back to the London Office was a pair of Imperial Records, one three inches and the other six inches across, which played admirably on the office Balmain.

### The Ideal Homes Exhibition

At Olympia the gramophone industry was represented by Messrs. Chappell, Messrs. Keith Prowse and the Linguaphone Institute, while Fullotone and Dousona machines were also exhibited.

### Frederick Delius

The "Neglected Composers" article on Delius, which appears elsewhere—with a portrait, for which we are indebted to Messrs. John Lane, who published it in Philip Heseltine's book on the composer in 1923—may seem belated after all the press comments on Sir Thomas Beecham's striking letter in the *Evening Standard*, which started the ball rolling. But some further comment on the subject of the letters of Mr. A. L. F. Hill (November, page 236) and "Nemo" (January, page 352) is necessary, and we should like to endorse another plea put forward by Mr. Hill in an unpublished letter, that Columbia should record the *Violin Concerto* with Albert Sammons as the soloist and Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the orchestra, and that H.M.V. should entrust the *Cello Concerto* to Miss Beatrice Harrison.

### The Lener Quartet

The series of Beethoven quartet recitals of the Queen's Hall came to an end on March 8th. It has been a wonderful experience, one of those memories which will last a lifetime, and at the end one came away with the comforting reflection that the Columbia records (of which a list was wisely included in each programme) will enable one to refresh that memory if it ever grew hazy.

### Gilbert and Sullivan

The re-recording of *The Mikado* by H.M.V., which is announced for issue on the 15th of this month, marks another big undertaking by The Gramophone Company. Mr. Cameron's article on Gilbert and Sullivan records is held over till he can report on the first of these re-issues.

### Edwin Evans

The last of the series of ten "Causerie Recitals," given by Mr. Edwin Evans at the Aeolian Hall on Saturday evenings, took place on March 19th. Big audiences throughout confirmed the value of the lectures which one would expect from so accomplished a musical critic, and of the illustrations directed by Mr. Cuthbert Whitmore; and a mere list of the subjects—The Prelude, Some Old Dances and their Modern Treatment, Modern French Pianoforte Music, the Classical Sonata (to mid-Beethoven), Modern Spanish Pianoforte Music, the Piano Variation, the Romantic Sonata, the Etude, the Waltz, and Scriabin—indicates the charming intimate quality of the series. If this sort of thing can be organised by the Aeolian Company (to whom all honour) in praise of the pianoforte, why does not some recording company enlist the cooperation of Mr. Evans to lecture on the same lines to gramophonists with illustrations from records?

### Elgar

Similar lectures are, of course, sometimes delivered by well-known musical critics to various gramophone societies, as, for instance, when Mr. W. R. Anderson spoke on "Elgar Re-viewed" to the South-East London Recorded Music Society on February 14th. But the public lecture—or rather the public causerie recital—by really competent critics, illustrated by gramophone records, would surely give most of us an immense stimulus to the enjoyment of our record-libraries.



## To Continental Readers

A valued correspondent, writing from Biarritz, suggests that since certain records of wide importance are issued abroad and do not normally reach the English market, it would be a valuable development for THE GRAMOPHONE to publish from time to time short accounts from correspondents in France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, and Spain regarding recent issues of general interest. He instances Ravel's *La Valse*, recorded by the Symphony Orchestra under Albert Coates and issued apparently only in France.

Needless to say, we should welcome the offer of any reader who is in a position to act as our correspondent in any of the countries mentioned above.

## South Place Concerts

Mr. William Meadmore, whose article on unrecorded chamber music appears elsewhere in this number, is one of the "Hon. Asst. Secs." of the South Place concerts and is responsible for a most interesting history of them—"The Story of a Thousand Concerts" (price 1s. from F. A. Hawkins, 13, Thurlow Park Road, S.E.21)—which is a mine of information about chamber music and its performers, and an inspiration to all lovers of the best in music.

## Staff Revels

The Gramophone Company held a "Staff Revel" at the Wharnclyffe Rooms on the 15th, which was a rattling success from start to finish: fancy dress, masks, a cabaret show, and any amount of dancing to the music of the Hyltonians, gave the colour, variety and gaiety to the evening which were to be expected from such experienced organisers and such cheery company.

## A Record Carrier

The new Decca Metal Record Carrier at 12s. 6d. is worth remembering. It holds 24 records and besides its other virtues has the practical advantage of "staying put," instead of toppling over.

Messrs. Barnett Samuel and Co. report a 33½ per cent. increase of trade in 1926, as compared with 1925, and are enlarging their factory; a further instance of prosperity in the trade to add to the examples already mentioned in previous months.

## Zonophone

From the British Zonophone Co. come the new catalogue (up to January) in a bright cover, and specimens of the new Zonophone needles, made out of the best British steel and sold at 9d. a box of 200. Many thanks! Vitality is the Zonophone watchword, and we expect daily a change of name to Zoephone.

## Beltona

The new Beltona catalogue (also up to January) is worth a careful reading, especially for Scotsmen. It contains records of good songs which cannot be found in other catalogues and of singers, too, of considerable distinction. Otherwise it is a good all-round catalogue, in which Beltona enthusiasts are never disappointed.

## Vocalion and Aco

In addition to Beltona records the Murdoch Trading Company controls the distribution of Vocalion and Aco records throughout Scotland, the North and West of England, and South Wales. This information supplements the note on these records which appeared in the February number.

## Remainders

Black's "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," published at 21s. in 1924, is now "remaindered" at 7s. 6d., and Mr. Sydney Grew's "The Art of the Player-Piano," published at 12s. 6d. in 1922, can be obtained for 3s. 9d.

## Acoustic Tiles

Emile Berliner, who shares (or declines to share—the controversy is futile) with Thomas Edison the honour of having invented the gramophone, has now patented the acoustic tiles on which he has been working for the last year and a half, and has demonstrated them in a practical way by putting them into a notoriously ill-sounding building in Washington and obtaining extraordinarily satisfactory results. Since old as well as new buildings can be treated with this invention, it is likely to be very thoroughly tested in the near future. What about the Albert Hall?

## Edison Records

Although the new Edison Diamond Disc Phonograph appears to be still hesitating to make its descent upon the English market, some of our readers report very favourably on it, suggesting that it is "vastly superior" to any other kind of sound-reproducing instrument. That may be, and the sooner we can test the statement the better. Meanwhile the 40-minute Edison discs are available, costing 15s. each, and the 24-minute discs costing 10s. each. But do we get a complete symphony or quartet or a song-cycle? No, Sir. We get "Recollections of Gilbert and Sullivan" on one side and "Memories" of Victor Herbert on the other, or a "Carmen" selection and an "Aida" selection, or a dinner-music record or a "galaxy of operatic gems."

## Comparative Tests

It is always interesting to hear the result of the voting where an audience has listened to competing gramophones, and since our own tests at the Steinway and Caxton halls in past years we have had to rely on gramophone societies' reports for accounts of comparative tests—generally only between two machines. But a reader sends us the result of voting by an audience of about a hundred people of more than average intelligence—an expert audience he calls them—in which the Peridulce scored twenty-four firsts against a next best of ten firsts. Not one of the audience had ever heard of the Peridulce before, "and yet they preferred it to the well-known makes." How many well-known makes competed does not transpire, nor what was the nature of the tests.

## Musical Studies in Germany

We have received for review a copy of "The Study of Music in Germany," edited by Karl Kiesel and Ernst Otto Thiele, and published by the "University Department of the North German Lloyd in collaboration with the Union of German Students of Music." There is a quantity of information and of sound sense in the essays contributed by well-known German musicians such as Adolf Weissmann, Franz Schreker, Arnold Schering, Curt Sachs, Max Friedländer, and others, and the illustrations are exceedingly well chosen and printed. Though the book is only the first of a series ("an attempt to re-establish international musical relations") and though it is professedly written to impress and attract Americans, any Englishman who is thinking of going to study music in Germany would be well advised to write for a copy to Dr. Karl Kiesel, 13 Margaretenstrasse, Berlin, W.10.

As Dr. Friedländer aptly remarks in his introductory essay, "Let us earnestly hope that the innate fondness for the Significant—often joined to a rejection of what is merely pleasing—which is so characteristic of the Germans, may unite itself with those especially American qualities of a clear perception and discriminating good-taste; and that a better understanding on both sides—particularly an appreciation of the 'keen spirit' and optimistic daring of the Americans—may bring forth fruits rich in benefit to both nations!"

Herr Doktor, you've said a jugful.

## Syncopated Melodies

Some ingenious films which will catch the popular fancy are based on tunes of the moment such as *Chinese Moon*, *Because I Love You*, *The Froth-blowers' Anthem* and so on; the co-operation of Jack Hylton and H.M.V. has enabled all sorts of bewilderingly clever effects to be produced. The gramophone is coming into its own in the film world.

## "Music and the Gramophone"

Mr. H. L. Wilson's book, which has been so strongly sponsored by our Editor, gets rather a slating from *The Phonograph*, the reviewer being at great pains to show that "Music and the Gramophone" lacked some points with which it never professed to deal. Therefore, we prefer the sort of criticism of it that is given in the Gramophone Notes of the *Leicester Mail* for March 10th:—

"One cannot commence a review of the latest records in a better way than by drawing the attention of all real music lovers to a remarkable book which has been written especially for their benefit. It is called 'Music and the Gramophone' by H. L. Wilson (published by the publishers of THE GRAMOPHONE), and is a veritable gold mine of information to those readers who indulge in complete works in recorded form—dealing as it does with the history, musical structure, and other necessary details concerning nearly all the most important works yet recorded in complete form—it is invaluable in fact."



# ARMCHAIR PHONATICS

By P. WILSON

## The Gramophone in the Living Room

IN my February article I explained several features of sound-propagation which can materially affect the quality of reproduction that we get from the gramophone in our homes. The main conclusion was that it should be our object to arrange that the sound fills the room as quickly and with as little reverberation as possible; and in connection with this the effects of temperature, air-currents and absorptive materials were noted. At first sight it might be thought that some reverberation is desirable. Without reverberation music sounds dead, as though it were being played in a padded room. Too much reverberation on the other hand causes one tone to be prolonged into a succeeding one, and so tends to blur the sound. Professor W. C. Sabine of Harvard conducted numerous experiments upon this question and found that when reverberation was varied a group of musicians consistently selected a particular condition as being most desirable (*Collected Papers* p. 75). The time of reverberation thus determined was 1.08 seconds. It is significant, too, that the B.B.C. deliberately use echo rooms and other apparatus whereby the time of reverberation can be accurately controlled. A most illuminating series of articles on this point has recently been appearing in the *Wireless World*.

But it should be noted that these results affect the recording rooms rather than the reproducing room. The recording companies have for some time experimented very extensively with the control of echo effects and the results have been very apparent in the records of recent months.

In reproducing records we do not want either to add to or to subtract from the qualities of reverberation which the recording companies have deliberately introduced. In a small living room, unless there is a good deal of heavy furniture about, the difficulty is to avoid additional reverberation; in the excepted case the difficulty is precisely the opposite. In a large room, on the other hand, the difficulty is to prevent absorption before the room is filled with sound and the "dead" effect is usually only too much in evidence. It should be noted in this connection that the actual volume of sound reproduced affects the result very substantially. The greater the volume the easier it is to get the right quality in a large room, and the more difficult it is to avoid excessive reverberation in a small one. In a paper published in the *Journal of the Franklin Institute* in September 1923, Dr. H. Fletcher demonstrated that a form of distortion is intro-

duced if the loudness of reproduction is materially outside the range in which listeners are accustomed to hear the original sounds. It has been concluded from this, quite rashly I think, that our object should be to get the reproduction as loud as the original performance. That conclusion is no doubt true for a large hall of a size comparable with that in which the original performance took place. But it is obviously untrue for a small living room. There anything like the original volume would be totally unbearable. Provided that the *relative* intensities of the original sounds are preserved a reduction in *absolute* volume is highly desirable in a small room. It is the definite experience of many of us that given a reasonable volume, such, for example, as can be obtained from a good horn gramophone with even a fibre needle, the acoustic properties of an ordinary living room can be adjusted so as to give at any rate the illusion of listening to the original performance from, say, the back of the gallery in the Queen's Hall; and that, I submit, is not very far from the condition of listening to the reproduced sounds at a loudness which is within the range in which most of us hear the original sounds.

To obtain this result, however, it is necessary to study carefully the position of the gramophone in the room with regard to furniture, draperies, etc. If the room contains much furniture (that is, for its size) it is essential that the opening of the horn should be well above the furniture. Most people with pedestal gramophones would get far better results if they stood them on boxes or platforms at least 12in. high. Similarly, it is a bad mistake to put a table model on a dining-room table, particularly if the table-cloth is on. It is, indeed, a very sound rule to keep the gramophone well away from other furniture, and as high as possible. With external horn machines the horn should open out not lower than half-way between the floor and the ceiling. A position rather higher than that is preferable, if it can be managed.

(To be continued.)

### Technical Correspondence

Not unnaturally, Mr. P. Wilson has been worried by an increasing volume of correspondence from readers of THE GRAMOPHONE who write direct to him and expect him to help them gratuitously in all their major and minor perplexities. His good nature and anxiety to respond have led to an impossible situation. Letters addressed to him care of THE GRAMOPHONE, containing *simple questions which have not already been answered in THE GRAMOPHONE* and accompanied by a stamped and addressed envelope, will gladly be answered. But more than this he cannot undertake.



# CREDE EXPERTO

By OUR EXPERT COMMITTEE

SOUND-BOXES FOR ELECTRIC RECORDING—*continued.*

## Material and Type.

**D**URING our experiments we have arrived at very definite conclusions concerning the material of which a sound-box should be made. It may be, of course, that our researches have not been extensive enough, and that if we had tried more of the infinity of possible variations we should have been able to make other materials answer equally well. But the fact remains that our best results have always been obtained with one particular combination of materials; and, what is much more important, we have been able to repeat those results over and over again. Let there be no mistake, however. Sound-box tuning requires great patience and keen hearing. Occasionally one hits the proper quality straight away, but as a rule a certain amount of coaxing is necessary. The only thing one can hope to do in the design and assembly of the sound-box is to get somewhere near the proper quality. The fine adjustment is an entirely separate and distinct process.

The types of sound-box with which we shall specially deal in this series of articles are—

- (i) The *Exhibition* type—which includes the *Saturn*, *Expression*, and *Exportation*, as well as the new *Orchorsol*;
- (ii) The *H.M.V. No. 2* and the *Prizma*phone;
- (iii) The *Columbia No. 7*.

We should get better results, no doubt, if we were to design a sound-box *ab initio*. But we find that each of the above-mentioned sound-boxes can be modified to give really magnificent quality and we feel that our essay will be of more practical value if we concern ourselves with the adaptation of existing sound-boxes than if we were to describe a theoretical ideal which is not within the reach of all. The first type of sound-box has the smallest diaphragm and is most certainly the best to use for fibre needles. It is also unsurpassed for steel needles, but the tuning in that case is a far more delicate and difficult matter and may cost a few records before it is satisfactorily accomplished. We therefore recommend that for steel needles readers should use sound-boxes of the second and third types, all of which have diaphragms of 47 mm. or over.

For reasons which will appear more fully in the sequel we very much prefer to use sound-boxes in which the *body* is made in two pieces: a *back-plate* and a *front rim*. When there is one piece

only, the diaphragm has to be inserted from the front and fixed in position in its gaskets before being attached to the stylus-bar. It is then largely a matter of luck whether the diaphragm will be cracked or strained in being screwed up, and in any case the facilities for subsequent tuning are seriously limited. We find that both the back plate and front rim should be made of brass, the harder the better. Aluminium, vulcanised fibre, ebonite and even lead alloys are sometimes used, for various reasons. But we have not yet heard of a box made from any of these materials which was capable of giving an adequate response to a wide range of pitch, nor have we been able to tune one to our satisfaction. No, we plump for brass every time. All the sound-boxes mentioned above are satisfactory in this respect.

The size of the hole in the back-plate is largely determined by the bore of the tone-arm. The smaller it is the more damping there will be on the diaphragm and the more chance the latter has of being aperiodic. There is a limit of smallness, however, beyond which it is not wise to go, owing to the rapid increase of friction in tubes of small bore. We put that limit tentatively at  $\frac{1}{4}$  in. to  $\frac{3}{8}$  in. The bore of most tone arms is much larger than that, and there is little, if any, advantage in making the hole in the back-plate smaller than the bore of the tone-arm. The usual size of hole, viz.,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. to  $\frac{5}{8}$  in., will therefore be satisfactory for most machines. It allows a little margin for inaccurate centring of the rubber back or other attachment to the tone-arm.

As regards weight we find that we can get better results when the back-plate and rim together weigh about 5 to 7 ounces. The latter is rather more weight than we like to have pressing on the record (and this can, in any case, be regulated by a suitable weight adjuster), but there are distinct advantages in having a sound-box which opposes a fair amount of inertia to lateral motion. This inertia is of considerable importance for low frequency vibrations; it is very difficult to get a light sound-box to respond at all adequately to the bass. There is also a distinct advantage in having the weight as nearly as possible symmetrically disposed with regard to the needle point. We shall return to this matter later when dealing with stylus-bar mountings. Here we will simply state it as a postulate that for the best results the needle point and the centre of gravity of the weight which presses on to the record should be in the



plane of the diaphragm. This latter condition is not usually realisable in practice since the back-plate is much heavier than the front rim, but there are means of approximating to it fairly closely.

We have remarked before that the design of the stylus-bar has received but scant attention from gramophone makers and writers. We have been able to prove beyond all manner of doubt that the shape and material are very important, and the recently developed electrical analogy of the sound-box mechanism has shown why this should be so. For sound-boxes of the second and third types mentioned above, spare stylus-bars do not appear to be sold separately, so that the majority of people will be limited to the one supplied with the sound-box. Fortunately, they are pretty good and may be made better by a little attention. For boxes of the Exhibition type, however, a variety of stylus-bars are available. The *Exhibition* boxes themselves, and particularly the pre-war U.S.A. samples, have very good stylus-bars. So also has the *Orchorsol*, though we find that decidedly better for steel needles than for fibres. Most of the continental copies of the *Exhibition*, however, have very poor stylus-bars, the only really satisfactory one that we have found being that in the *Saturn*. It is a matter for some thankfulness that these stylus-bars can be obtained independently (about 2s. each). We have experimented with them a good deal and find that they may be made into really first-class articles with a minimum of trouble. The only difficulty is that the peg connection between the needle-holder and the stylus-plate is of small diameter and sometimes does not allow the triangular slot for fibre needles to be cut right through.

If we may digress a little from our main theme, there are some remarks which seem appropriate at this point regarding the use of steel and fibre needles. We greatly deplore the modern tendency of cutting the needle socket of every sound-box so that it can be used for either type of needle. If a sound-box is tuned for the one it is never quite right for the other. Most of the ordinary commercial sound-boxes do reasonably well with steel needles and very poorly with fibres. It seems to us that it would be a much better practice to issue a sound-box exclusively for one or the other and to cut the needle socket accordingly. For steel needles a triangular socket is an unmitigated nuisance; the needle never beds properly, the strain on the needle screw is unduly great, and the shank of the needle is given a freedom of motion which only causes it to buzz and chatter. A circular socket of exactly the right size to take a steel needle without play is very much better. On the other hand, for fibre needles the triangular sockets usually made are neither big enough nor deep enough to be satisfactory. As a rule, they

will only hold very thin fibres, which are never good, and they will only grip about  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. of the needle, with the result that as the needle is cut a different length projects from the socket. For fibres, *and for fibres only*, it is highly desirable that the hole should be cut right through the socket so that the same amount of projection may be used however many times the needle has been cut. The ideal amount of projection will vary with each particular sound-box, and probably also with different records, and should be determined and noted down from actual experiment. With the method of tuning which we are about to describe a projection of between  $\frac{1}{16}$  in. and  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. to the actual point will be found to be suitable.

In our experience, the best material for the upper arm of the stylus-bar is a mild steel. Very soft iron like that used in the *Exportation* stylus-bars is not satisfactory; neither is hard steel, which is used in some other boxes. The one gives what we might term a "smoky" atmosphere to the reproduction, whilst the other has too much tendency to shrillness and edge. Indeed, a hard steel stylus-bar is sometimes used in the large-diaphragm sound-boxes to give that very quality, the diaphragm itself having low-pitched resonances which are not damped out in the amplification system.

The shape which we find most suitable for the upper arm is that shown in Fig. 1, though those shown in Figs. 2 and 3 can be made to answer extremely well. Figs. 4 and 5 show stylus-bars of bad shape.

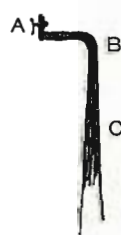


FIG. 1.



FIG. 2.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.



FIG. 5.

The essential points appear to be—

1. Lightness, combined with substantial rigidity at the lower end C.
2. Substantial flexibility or compliance at the upper end B. In Fig. 1 the upper end should be



not less than  $\frac{3}{16}$  in. long and not more than 1 sq. mm. in cross section.

3. A shoe A (to take the diaphragm screw) which is small and as nearly as possible in line with the upper end B. In the H.M.V. No. 2 and No. 4 boxes, of course, there is no shoe, the diaphragm screw fitting directly into the upper end. In the other types the shoe should preferably be riveted or welded to the upper end. Soldering is not

satisfactory; this, incidentally, is the fault of the *Expression* stylus-bars. In bars of the type shown in Fig 5. the shoe is usually in one piece with the upper arm and is twisted round to the right direction. The twist is unsatisfactory, as is also the fact that by this method the diaphragm screw is substantially out of alignment with the upper-end B.

(To be continued.)



## A HANDSOME GIFT FROM H.M.V.

One of the difficulties of assessing the performance of any reproducer in the past has been the absence of a definite standard of comparison. We have been dependent upon more or less vague aural judgments and criticisms have been governed to a large extent by the personal tastes and experience of the judges.

It is therefore with the greatest pleasure and gratitude that we acknowledge our indebtedness to the Gramophone Company for a gift which will go a long way towards solving this ticklish problem. It is now fully recognised that the best and most scientific test of the value of a reproducer is the manner of its response to notes of various frequencies. With present day recording, the reproducer should give an approximately equal response to notes throughout the range from about 100 cycles up to about 6,000 cycles. Within that range, notes of equal loudness should be reproduced as notes of equal loudness.

The desiderata hitherto have been means of producing notes of equal loudness but of varying pitch and means of accurately measuring the response of the gramophone to those notes. Thanks to the generosity of the Gramophone Company, we have now been able to solve the first and more difficult problem and our Expert Committee are devising suitable means of solving the second. We have known for some time that the Gramophone Company and their associates in America had gone to an enormous amount of trouble and expense to make records of pure tones of equal loudness and different pitches. It was therefore with some temerity that we approached them to supply us with a set of those records for the use of our Expert Committee. We need have had no hesitation. With their customary friendliness and generosity and with a public spirit which we cannot appraise too highly, the Company immediately responded to our requests by making us two complete sets—76 single-sided records in all. The range of frequency covered by these records is from 25 cycles to 8,000 cycles. The lowest note has a pitch between that of a 16-ft. (32 cycles) and a

32-ft. (16 cycles) organ pipe and the highest note is nearly 5 octaves above middle C. The total range is therefore about 8 octaves.

Up to the present the Committee have only had time to make one or two preliminary tests with these records. Even so, it has become abundantly clear that they will be quite invaluable to any serious experimenter. They have already settled one or two difficult questions of the utmost importance, and readers may expect, in due course, to hear a good deal about them from our Expert Committee.

## The British Musician

### A Monthly Periodical

EDITED BY

SYDNEY GREW

**E**ACH number contains articles (non-technical) of interest to all music lovers. New Gramophone Records are extensively reviewed, mainly with a view to explaining the music. Several standard orchestral compositions are analysed and described in each number, with a generous supply of musical quotations.

"The British Musician" is declared by reviewers in the newspapers to be "Not too high for the low-brow or too low for the high-brow," "The most dignified and informative of all musical periodicals," and "Of a character which gives to each number the permanent value and interest of a book."

The April number contains more **Beethoven**, with another portrait; articles by A. H. Fox-Strangways, Neville d'Esterre, Eva Mary Grew, H. E. Wortham (on Auric and Poulenc), a very helpful set of **BEETHOVEN GRAMOPHONE REVIEWS**, and a mass of other matter.

Single Copies: 7½d. post free. Annual Subscription: 7/6 post free. A specimen copy (old issue) will be sent on receipt of 1½d. in stamps. Address: The Secretary, 53, Barclay Road, Warley Woods, Birmingham.



## CORRESPONDENCE

*De Gustibus Non Est Disputandum.*

[All letters and manuscripts should be written on one side only of the paper and should be addressed to the Editor, The Gramophone, 58, Firth Street, London, W.1. The writer's full name and address must be given. A stamped envelope must be enclosed if an answer or the return of the manuscript is desired. The Editor wishes to emphasise the obvious fact that the publication of letters does not imply his agreement with the views expressed by correspondents.]

## MULTIPLE REVIEWING.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

SIR,—My attention has been drawn to a criticism of myself, on the ground of multiple reviewing, in your issue for February.

There are, of course, several arguments against multiple reviewing, and some of them you have stated with characteristic fairness and restraint. There are also, perhaps, some arguments on the other side. But I write merely to ask you to correct certain errors of fact into which you have (of course inadvertently) fallen.

You suggest that I review novels in the *Observer* and the *Saturday Review* over my own name, and in another weekly over a pseudonym. This is not true, and was never at any time true. On the contrary, I resigned from the *Saturday Review* novel-reviewing immediately upon taking up pseudonymous work of the same character for another weekly, and I was not at that time writing for the *Observer* at all. (I was, however, reviewing regularly for the *Daily News*.) It is true that after I started with the *Observer* I did for a little while carry on with the pseudonymous work for the other weekly, but I relinquished that at the end of last year, and am at present reviewing novels only for the *Observer* and the *Daily News*.

Moreover, though the work for these two papers certainly to some extent overlaps, I review a considerable number of books for the *Observer* which I do not review for the *Daily News*, and a considerable number for the *Daily News* which I do not review for the *Observer*.

I send this correction, not by way of expressing or implying any opinion on the general question, but simply because I think that, if a man is attacked, it should be on the facts and not on a mistake about the facts.

London.

Yours faithfully,

GERALD GOULD.

[I must apologise to Mr. Gould for my inaccuracy. However, he will be the first to admit that his many facets might confuse one, especially when each of them sparkles so brightly.—C. M.]

## FETISHISM.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

SIR,—One of the effects of the introduction of electrical recording seems to be an addition to the growing list of gramophonic aberrations. It is becoming quite an every-day occurrence for someone to exclaim "Oh, I can't listen to old recordings now," and I have known more than one case of professed music lovers who have declared that rather than be obliged to put up with an old-style recording of a work, no matter how good, they would go without records of that work altogether. In other words, it was the recording, not the music, that mattered.

Now that appears to me to be a mild form of fetishism, a re-incarnation of that other deplorable form of mental disturbance which, under the form of celebrity worship, was very prevalent amongst members of gramophone societies a few years ago. The unhappy sufferers from this complaint had little or no knowledge of music, and were frequently incapable of distinguishing between good singing and bad, their sole criterion of the value of a record being the colour of the label. Now, I do not wish to suggest that the worshippers of the new recording are quite so benighted, but I do suggest that to exalt the mechanical above the spiritual in this manner is to run the risk of failing to appreciate and to understand music at all.

Let me not be misunderstood. I yield to no one in my admiration for the marvellous results achieved by the new process, and obviously if I have to choose between a mechanical and an electrical record of, say, the Prelude to *Lohengrin*, I shall

choose the latter, provided that the playing and conducting please me. But if I have to choose between a mechanical record of, say, Beethoven's *First Piano Concerto*, or no records of it at all, I should choose the non-electric records rather than go without the Concerto altogether. The works mentioned have, of course, no relation to any records of them that may or may not be in existence—they are simply taken haphazard in order to make my point clear.

Balham.

Yours faithfully,

"MUSIC LOVER."

## HANDEL OVERTURES.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

DEAR SIR,—On looking through recent numbers of THE GRAMOPHONE, I have discovered to my surprise that there is still a particular class of music which has not been specially "pleaded" for, and so I step into the gap. Of course, I feel sure the recording companies are already engaged on more organ music, more Mendelssohn, more *Lieder*, the whole of *Tristan*, some Haydn Symphonies, something by Glazounov and the seventeen other neglected composers mentioned in the March number, not to mention the "sphärenklänge." (No wonder we have to plead for cheaper records!)

But before it is too late, may I add my plea to the many, and that is for at least one, if not half a dozen, of Handel's overtures? At present there is only one that I know of—that in D minor, and a very old disc, too. There are thirty-four discs of *The Messiah*, yet no English company (nor any other as far as I am aware) has given us the overture. This and the overtures to *Samson*, *Saul*, and *Berenice*, to name but four, are surely great music, and tuneful enough to please anybody.

Catterick Camp.

Yours faithfully,

M. C. A. HEPPEL.

## CHEAP COMPLETE WORKS.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

SIR,—Mr. Thiman in his able article (p. 438) has chosen an unsuitable example in the Bach *D Minor Concerto* to illustrate his plea against unnecessary duplication. Complete works should always be estimated by their total cost and not by their price per disc. The H.M.V. version of this work is cut, and costs 18s., the fourth side being occupied by Tchaikovsky's *Andante Cantabile* (cut) which nobody who has the complete *Quartet in D Major*, or one of the two other complete versions of this slow movement, can possibly want. The Columbia edition (complete) of the Bach Concerto costs 19s. 6d., with a Spohr "fill-up" on the sixth side. This should be included amongst "Long works on too many discs," for the complete Vocalion version occupies four full sides for 11s. 1. Moreover, it is one of the best examples of the delightful artistry of Mlle. Aranyi and Mme. Fachiri, being rivalled by the Handel *Sonata for Two Violins*, complete in four movements for 9s., by the same players.

An excellent wood-wind work which few people appear to know is Ludwig Thuille's *Sextet for Wood-Wind and Piano*, by the London Wind Quintet and Charles Woodhouse, on two Edison Bell discs for 8s.

With regard to Mendelssohn, a very tolerable though incomplete version of his Violin Concerto can be obtained for 12s. by buying the First Movement by Zacharewitsch (Edison Bell 652) and the Second and Third Movements by Huberman (Brunswick 50049). There is a very charming version of the *Piano Concerto in G Minor* by Marie Novello and the Royal Symphony Orchestra on three Edison Bell discs (sixth side *Rondo Capriccioso*) for 12s. The two Liszt Piano Concertos and the Franck *Symphonic Variations*, at 8s. each work (Edison Bell), are also good value. Anderson Tyrer is the soloist.

Yours faithfully,

London, S.W.17.

J. C. W. CHAPMAN.

## OUR SYMPOSIUM.

*(To the Editor of THE GRAMOPHONE.)*

SIR,—I found your symposium of considerable interest. As a representative of a large and not unimportant class, I should have welcomed an opportunity to contribute.



My favourite song is *Home, Sweet Home*, and my favourite singer Dame Clara Butt. My favourite composer is Kettelbey, and my favourite tune one I heard de Groot play often in the past. At the moment I cannot recall the title, but it is either by Bach or Gounod.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton appears to be trying to be facetious and Mr. Bernard Shaw rude, but Mr. Gilbert Frankau seems a sensible sort of person. Who is Lord Berners?

May I conclude by venturing an opinion on the oft-discussed question whether Britain is a musical nation? It should be pointed out that we are richer than any other nation in domestic ballads of a simple, appealing type. This is apt to be forgotten by the high-brows, though luckily it is remembered by our great virtuosi.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

London, N.W. 3.

A BRITISH TAXPAYER.

## EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

[Apologies are herewith offered to the correspondents concerned if the blue pencil has foreshortened the perspective of their views. They have themselves partly to blame.—LONDON ED.]

The recent discussion in your columns regarding the exclusion of society reports has tempted me to make a list of the varied contents of THE GRAMOPHONE in the order of their appeal to me.

1. Advertisements giving lists of recordings. 2. Reviews. 3. Editor's reviews. 4. Advertisements. 5. Anything by the Editor. 6. Trade winds and idle zephyrs. 7. Correspondence, notes and queries. 8. Special articles (Scholes, Latham's Wagner). 9. Technical articles. 10. Herman Klein's articles. 11. Book reviews. 12. Society reports.

The above is based entirely on the order in which I read the current issue. It is evident that I judge the contents primarily by an *information on records* standard. The tantalizing question as I open the wrappers of the newest issue is "What has been recorded?" Then, "Is the recording good?" A calmer reading then follows for opinions on the records published previous to the current month. The society reports could easily become as important as the reviews, if they would discuss the best records played at their meetings. How interesting if one could turn to the back of the magazine and get the views of a dozen societies on various records. One writer, the Editor, is read for his ideas, regardless of my interest in the particular subject under discussion. Mr. Herman Klein, in spite of his immense background, does not interest me as I should expect him to. His comments on operatic records in the reviews, of course, are splendid...—Dr. K. E. BRITZIUS, Minneapolis.

## SUGGESTIONS.

(1) There are several articles, or types of article, that would add to the interest of your journal. The "Auxetophone," invented by the Hon. Charles Parsons, the inventor of the steam turbine, was a serious rival to "direct" music twenty years ago, when the best gramophone was a bad gramophone. What has happened to it? Could the inventor be asked to write about it? It is too readily assumed that electric ways of doing things must be an advance on any other way. In driving machinery, to choose an unfamiliar but convincing instance, steam is still better than electricity. The exhaust steam is necessary for scalding and heating and costs nothing when there is a steam plant but not an electric plant.

(2) By using a parabolic mirror in place of the recording horn, records could be made to rival the electric recordings. The "Acoustic Ear" was greatly improved during the war, to listen for aeroplanes at Dover, for instance. Elementary facts in acoustics are very much neglected by experts. A series of articles on these, with special reference to the gramophone, would be helpful.

(3) Pentagraph Records.—Old recordings, that could not be repeated for some reason, could be improved by copying in the lathe or on a wheel designed for the purpose. The "scoring" could be enlarged and many defects worked out by use of a special "pentagraph."

(4) Telephonograph Long-playing Records. For really long-playing records there is nothing to compete with the electromagnetic "Telephonograph," except where synchronism is wanted with pictures. This is best known in America, but some of the B.B.C. people could give information—ADAM BLACK, Perth.

# NATIONAL GRAMOPHONIC SOCIETY NOTES

(All communications should be addressed to The Secretary, N.G.S., 53, Frith Street, London, W.1.)

## The Orchestral Records

Seven new records are now ready for distribution. They are as follows:—

N.G.S. 69, 70, 71.—Corelli's *Concerto for Christmas Night* and Debussy's *Danse Sacrée* and *Danse Profane*.

N.G.S. 72.—Delius's *A Summer Night on the River*.

N.G.S. 73, 74.—Mozart's *Symphony in C major, No. 22* (K.200).

N.G.S. 75.—Peter Warlock's *Serenade* for strings (written for Delius on his sixtieth birthday).

All were recorded by the N.G.S. Chamber Orchestra, as previously described in these notes, and each record is 12-inch double-sided, and should be played at 80 revolutions a minute.

Members who have subscribed for 24 records in the year, under the original scheme, will receive all these seven records, making with the Schubert, Purcell, Beethoven and Brahms records already sent to them, a total of 20 for the season. The remaining four, which will be distributed in July, will contain Ravel's *Quartet in F major*.

## Numbering Records

The old method of using letters of the alphabet to distinguish N.G.S. records having grown cumbrous, all the records of the Society have been numbered consecutively, as may be seen in the above list. This system will be shown more clearly in the illustrated catalogue of N.G.S. records, which it is hoped to distribute to members next month.

## The Music Society Quartet

This quartet (consisting of André Mangeot and Boris Pecker, violins, Henry J. Berly, viola, and John Barbiroli, 'cello), which made many records for the Society last year, has recently been re-formed and re-named. The violinist is now Frank Howard and the 'cellist Herbert Withers, the first and second violins remaining unchanged, and the quartet is now called the International String Quartet. It is this combination which is recording the Ravel Quartet and, with Leon Goossens, the Bax Oboe Quintet for the Society.

## The Year's Programme

As we have the proposed programme for this year well in hand, and as we have had to cut out the Beethoven *Quartet in F minor*, Op. 95, which has been recorded by the Lener Quartet for Columbia, the Advisory Committee intend to ask Mr. Spencer Dyke to undertake a further work, to be issued between July and October. What shall it be? Schumann and Dvorák are not yet represented in our list; Mendelssohn is clearly coming into favour again. Will members who have views on the subject please write to the Secretary and say which of the following they think most suitable to round off the Society's activities in the third year?

Dvorák's *Piano Quintet in A*, Op. 81.

Mendelssohn's *String Quintet in A*, Op. 18.

Schumann's *String Quartet in F*, Op. 41, No. 2.

## Comments

"The records arrived last Saturday in good condition, and I like most of them among the very best so far published... We all particularly like the Goossens and Vaughan-Williams pieces."—A. C. RANKIN.

"What I particularly want to say is that I think the Goossens sonata is absolutely delightful and quite different from any other sonata I have ever heard. I hope the other movements will be recorded soon."—R. W. REVELL.

Members of the N.G.S. and readers of THE GRAMOPHONE can hear any or all the N.G.S. records in the special room lent to the Society for this purpose by Messrs Murdoch, Murdoch and Co., 463 Oxford Street, London, W.1.



# GRAMOPHONE VIGNETTES

By W. H. OSMAN

## ISOLDE MENGES

(Violinist)



**I**SOLDE MENGES was born at Hove, Brighton, in May, 1893. She first studied the violin with her father and mother, who were well-known teachers in Brighton. At the age of sixteen she went to St. Petersburg to study with Professor Leopold Auer.

Her début was made in February,

1913, with two orchestral concerts at Queen's Hall, London, at which she played Tchaikovsky, Beethoven, and Wieniawski concertos. Later in the same season, Madame Menges gave two recitals with piano, and in May, at an orchestral concert with Mengelberg conducting, she played Brahms and Glazounov concertos.

In the following season, 1913-1914, she was engaged with London Symphony Orchestra (Steinbach conducting), New Symphony Orchestra (Sir Landon Ronald), at Albert Hall, Queen's Hall Orchestra (Sir Henry Wood), Hallé Orchestra (Edinburgh and Manchester), Liverpool Philharmonic, etc. Madame Menges also gave four orchestral concerts in Berlin, the last conducted by Saponoff, who engaged her for Moscow and St. Petersburg with him. This was followed by an engagement to play with Mengelberg in Holland, but the last-named was cancelled owing to the war.

In 1915 an American tour was undertaken and engagements included the Boston Symphony and Chicago Symphony orchestras.

Her first records were made for H.M.V. in the 1913-1914 season. She states that her favourite record is the Bach *Chaconne* or Handel *Sonata in D* (both old process). She would like, and hopes, to make the Brahms *Concerto*.

Madame Menges added that she was very interested in the educational side of music, and while in America and Canada gave over 150 free concerts for children. On one occasion, in the Massey Hall, Toronto, she played to an audience of no less than 4,000 school children.

## FLORENCE AUSTRAL



**A**USTRALIA claims to have produced many noted singers, and Madame Austral is one of these. She was born in the very same suburb of Melbourne—Richmond—as the unforgettable Melba. Her first appearance in England was at Covent Garden in May, 1922, as Brünnhilde. This followed an eminently successful American tour, during which many glowing notices were won, after an illness which nearly

cost her her life. She had been engaged last January for three concerts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and during her journey there she caught influenza. At the second concert she sang with a temperature of 104°. She was then seriously ill, complications ensuing with mastoid trouble. Her life was at one time in danger. After eight weeks illness she went to Boston, and was called upon to sing in place of Madame Hulda Lashanska at one of the Wolfsohn series of symphony concerts. After the concert her name was mentioned by the critics in company with Schumann-Heink, Sembrich, Lehmann, and Ternina.

Madame Austral did not enter the Conservatorium of Music at Melbourne until she was eighteen years of age, and she had then decided to study the piano as well as singing. She was compelled to give up piano playing which caused neuritis in her hands, and then, she stated: "I had to learn everything all at once and catch up with girls who had studied singing all their lives." Her principal vocal teacher was Madame Wiedermann, of Vienna, a noted opera singer, who had been a pupil of Mathilde Marchesi. After eighteen months at the Melbourne Conservatorium Madame Austral came to London, and was coached by Mr. Hermann Grunebaum, the Covent Garden coach for German opera. Her voice quickly brought her to the notice of Mr. Albert Coates and others in authority, and on the advice of Mr. Henry Higgins she took the name of Florence Austral for her operatic début in the "Valkyrie" on May 16th, 1922, her real name being Florence Mary Wilson. In her first season she sang as Aida, Isolde, Elsa, Elisabeth, and all the Brünnhildes of "The Ring." Of these Isolde is her favourite rôle.



Madame Austral has sung at the Cincinnati Festival (in company with John McCormack) in 1925, and she has been engaged for the same festival for May, 1927. In this country she has sung at the Handel Festival twice, the Leeds, Worcester and Norwich festivals, and in the Verdi *Requiem* at the Crystal Palace in 1923.

She made her first record about four years ago for H.M.V. Her favourite recording of her own voice is the closing scene from *Götterdämmerung* ("The Ring"). She has just recorded a record she has always wanted to make, *Ocean, thou mighty monster*, from Weber's "Oberon." Madame Austral tells me "It is one of my best concert items, and on account of its difficulty (extreme range and dramatic intensity) it would be an achievement to make a good record of it."



## BILLY MAYERL



**B**ILLY MAYERL, who was born in London on May 31st, 1902, received his musical training at Trinity College of Music, London, where he passed all examinations in theory, harmony, counterpoint, orchestration, and piano-playing.

He played at Queen's Hall at his own recital at the age of seven, and in 1916 played for Royalty. For five years Mr. Mayerl was with the Savoy Havana Band at the Savoy Hotel as solo pianist. His first record was made with this combination in 1920 for the Columbia Gramophone Company.

In reply to a question as to his hopes for the future, Mr. Mayerl said: "Having made so many records, I am afraid it is impossible to state what record I would really like to make. About a year ago I should have liked to make George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*, but owing to the fact that it was already recorded, this was impossible."

I would recommend *That Night in Araby* (Voc. X.9896) as being one of the best recordings made by Billy Mayerl and his Vocalion Orchestra.

## GEORGE BAKER

(Baritone Vocalist)

**E**VEN if the often repeated taunt that vocalists are poor musicians were true, it could not be applied to George Baker, who was born on February 10th, 1885, at Birkenhead, son of Walter Baker, a well-known local musical amateur and conductor. Mr. Baker is married to Kathlyn Hilliard, one of the "Polly Peachum's" in the "Beggar's Opera," and now a principal soprano with the British National Opera Company.



They have one child, George Alan Hill Baker, two years of age.

Mr. Baker was educated at Birkenhead Institute and privately. For seven years, from the age of sixteen to twenty-three, he was an organist and choirmaster. He first of all studied singing with John Acton, of Manchester, and afterwards, when the latter removed to London, became his assistant. In 1908 Mr. Baker won an open scholarship for singing at the Royal College of Music, where he studied with Gustave Garcia. Early in 1914, he went to Milan for lessons from Thomas Blackburn, with whom he continued to study when he settled finally in London. Whilst at the Royal College of Music he won the diploma of A.R.C.M. and the London Musical Society's prize for singing. From 1919 to 1922 Mr. Baker was on the staff of the Guildhall School of Music.

He made his first appearance as a singer in February, 1908, with the Liverpool Symphony Orchestra. Before this he was an accompanist and appeared in that capacity at the early age of fourteen.

He has sung for all the big societies in the country, including the Royal Philharmonic Society, Royal Choral Society, Chappell Ballad Concerts, Queen's Hall Promenades, Liverpool Philharmonic Society, Hallé Concerts, Glasgow Choral and Orchestral Society, the Scottish Orchestra, Birmingham Festival Choral Society, Crystal Palace Festival Concerts, etc. He has also sung at Union Interalliée in Paris and toured Australia in 1922-1923.

He made his first record with the firm of Pathé Frères in 1910, and has recorded for Pathé Frères, the Beka Co., Aeolian Co., and H.M.V. He has been associated with the last continuously for ten years.

Mr. Baker informed me: "It is difficult to say what my favourite record of myself is. I have been famed in the recording world for a long time by



reason of my versatility. I claim to be the most versatile artist in the gramophone trade. I have sung every style of music—*Parsifal*, Beethoven's *Choral Symphony*, Richard Strauss's *Salomé* (in German), art songs, operatic arias, ballads, Gilbert and Sullivan operas, musical comedies, American syncopated songs, and have actually *recited* nursery stories and poems for the children's records under the name of 'Uncle George.' This is, I know, unique in the gramophone world. Amongst His Master's Voice records, I particularly like *Myself when young* (Liza Lehmann), *In Summertime on Bredon*, the songs from *When we were very young*, and *Three Shakespeare Songs* (Quilter). Amongst the Aeolian records I like *The Toreador's Song* (Bizet) and *Credo* from 'Otello' (Verdi)."

In addition to his concert work, Mr. Baker has had considerable theatrical experience. He has sung with the British National Opera Company and in Nigel Playfair's musical productions at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. He played in Musical Comedy in Australia for fourteen months, and has played in musical productions at the following London theatres—Gaiety, Ambassador's, Alhambra, The Hippodrome, Empire Theatre, and the Pavilion. He served in the war with the Honourable Artillery Company. He is a member of the committee of the Savage Club, a member of the Stage Golfing Society, and of the Royal Philharmonic Society.



## MANUEL HEMINGWAY

(Bass)



**R**YHILL, near Wakefield, was the birthplace of this promising singer. He was trained under Miss E. Lofthouse, of Wakefield. His first public appearance was as Captain Bobbie Preston in "San Toy" with the Ryhill Amateur Operatic Society in 1920. His first big engagement was with Carl Rosa Opera Company in 1921, and another important one was as Herr Damakaser in "Love Adrift" at the Gaiety Theatre, London, in 1926.

He would like to make a record of *Song of the Harp Player*, by Moussorgsky.

Mr. Hemingway confessed to the writer that he found recording one of his most nerve-wracking experiences. Why, he did not know.

## MAURICE COLE

(Pianist)

**M**AURICE COLE is well known to many thousands of gramophonists by reason of his recitals from 2 LO. He is a Londoner, born on January 29th, 1902. His first training was received at the Guildhall School of Music, and afterwards with Arthur de Greef, the famous Belgian pianist. He has never entered for any important academic distinctions.



He made his London début with four recitals at Wigmore Hall in the autumn of 1922. His first important engagement was in December, 1920, at St. Leonards-on-Sea, when he played the Rachmaninoff *Concerto* and the Grieg *Concerto*. He has also played at the Manchester Municipal Concerts with the Hallé Orchestra, with the Bradford Permanent Orchestra, and at concerts in Glasgow, Harrogate, Bournemouth, etc.

Mr. Cole made his first record for Vocalion over four years ago. He considers that his most effective performances for the gramophone are *Träumen-wirren* of Schumann, *Polichinelle* of Rachmaninoff, *Scherzo* of Mendelssohn, or the *Etudes* of Chopin which are lately issued. He would like to record many of the big piano works, concertos, etc., and hopes to have the opportunity of doing so before long.



## A DANCE TITLE IDYLL

By H.M.V. 10" d/s PLUM LABEL

Breezing along with the breeze In my gondola—  
When it's twilight on Missouri—I never miss the sunshine.

Pale moon Behind the clouds, At peace with the world—I never knew how wonderful—Just drifting, Drifting and dreaming: Nothing else to do.

Whole world is dreaming of love—So am I—I want somebody to cheer me up Then I'll be happy—Here comes Malinda!—Looking for a boy—Oh gee, oh gosh, oh golly, I'm in love! All that I need is you!—Every night I cry myself to sleep over you. Oh boy! what a girl! I love her, she loves me.—Just holding hands—My darling Creoning Creep into my arms—Say that you love me—Just one more kiss—Paradise!

Nights of gladness, Underneath the mellow moon.

R. W. B.